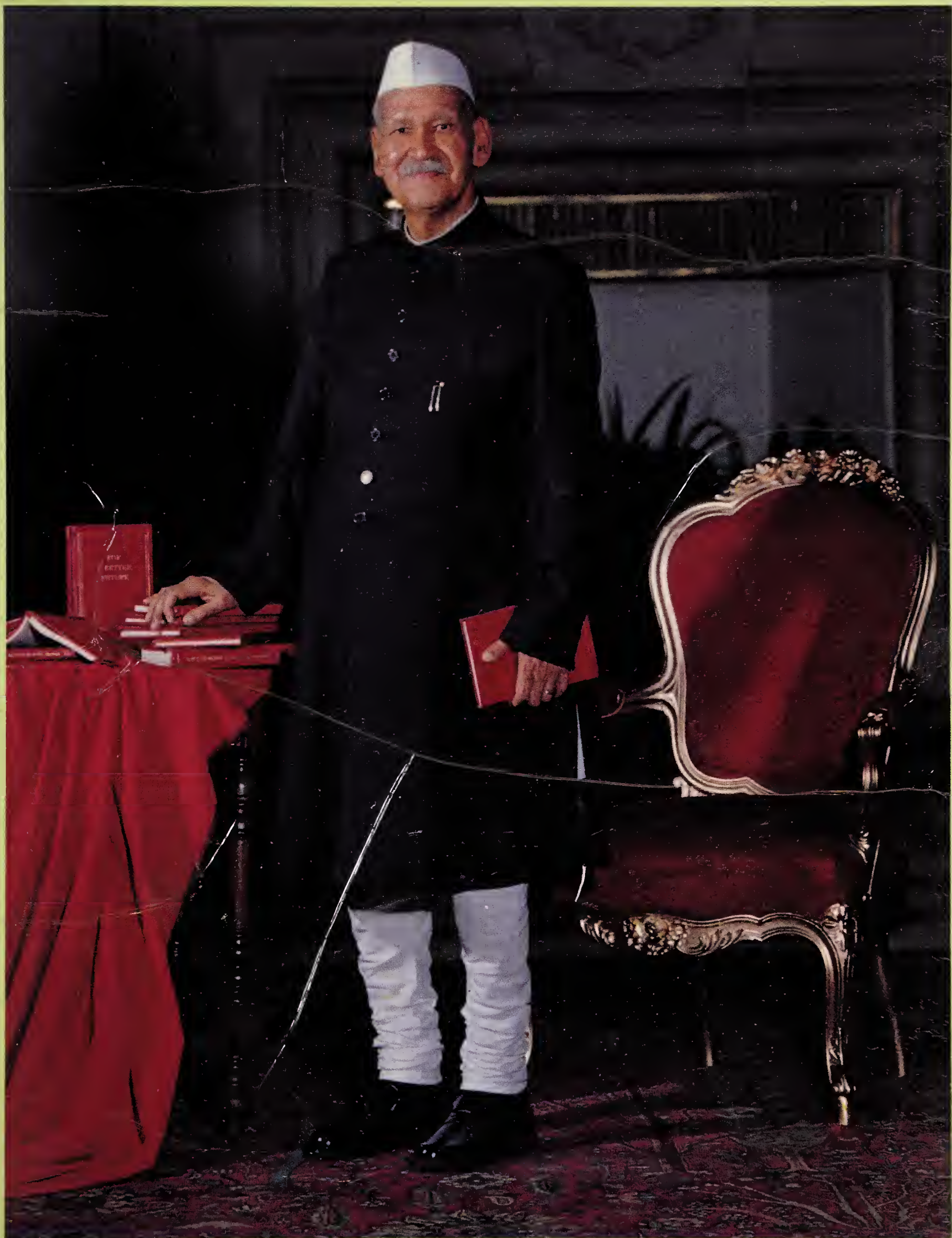


PRESIDENT

DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA



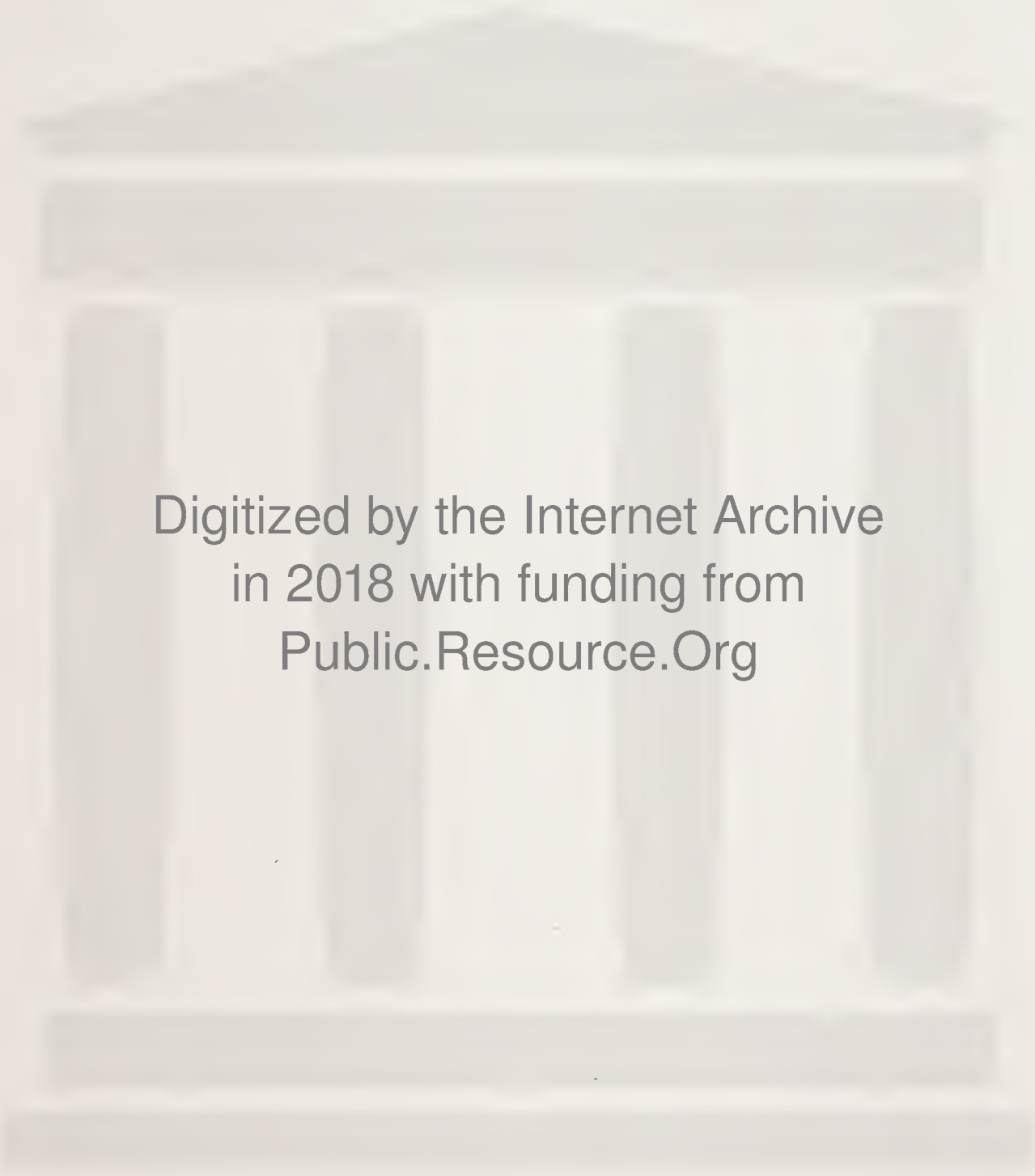
SELECTED SPEECHES VOLUME-II

This is the second volume of Selected Speeches of President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. It is the compilation of his important speeches from January 1995 up to July 1997.

This volume is divided into six parts. The first part comprises National Events, the second part Education and Culture and the third, fourth and fifth parts, Mass Communication, Science and Technology and Defence respectively and the last part includes topics like India and the World.

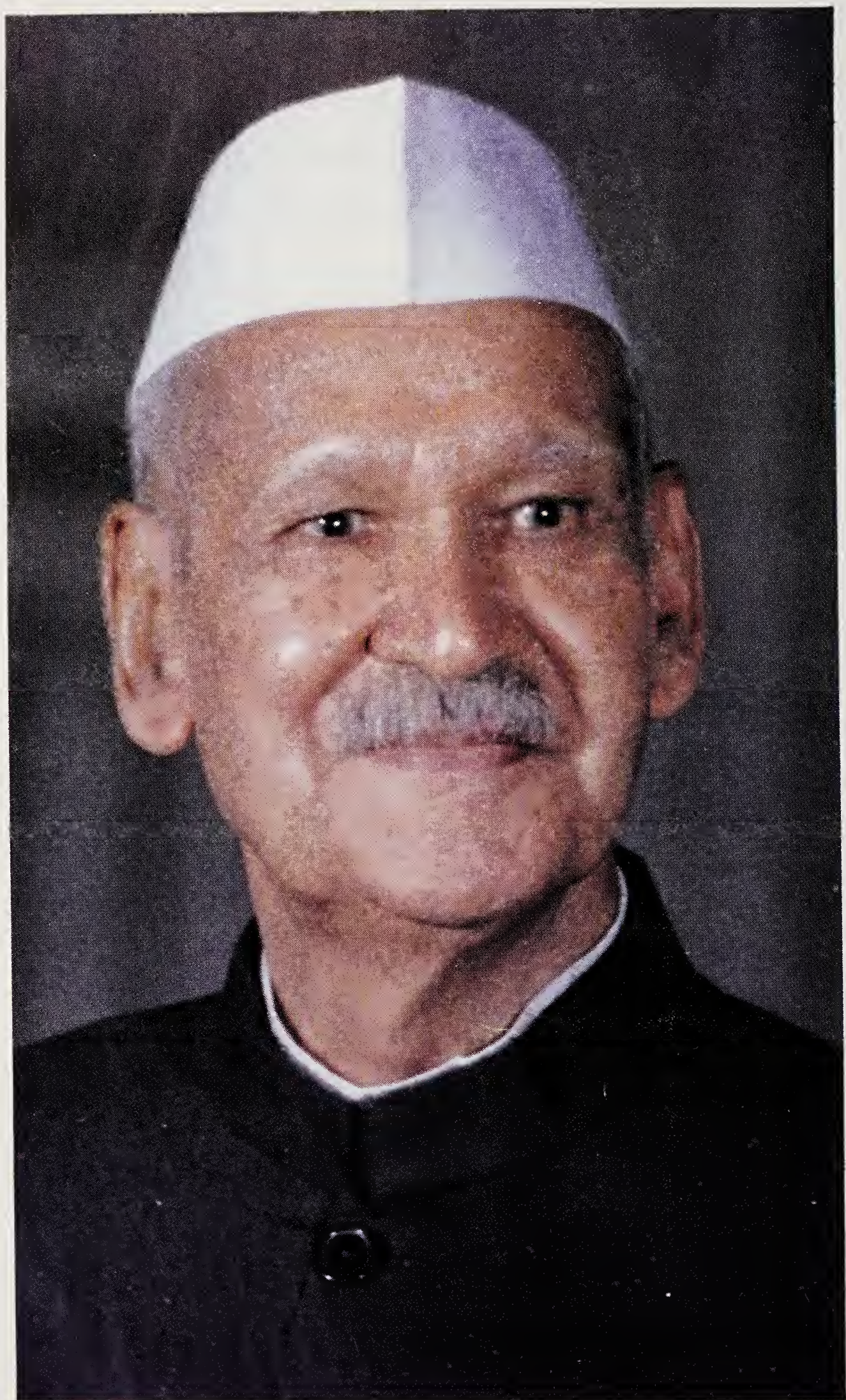
These speeches reflect Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma's views on various issues and problems. The aim of this book is to present comprehensive and indepth views of Dr. Sharma to the readers.

“It is very important that we clearly understand our national interests with reference to today's geopolitical relations.”



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Public.Resource.Org

PRESIDENT
DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA
SELECTED SPEECHES
VOLUME II



PRESIDENT
DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA
SELECTED SPEECHES

VOLUME II
JANUARY 1995—JULY 1997



PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

First Print 2000 (Saka 1921)

© PUBLICATIONS DIVISON



ISBN : 81-230-0614-4

Price Rs. 400/-

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, PUBLICATIONS DIVISION,
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
PATIALA HOUSE, NEW DELHI-110 001

SALES EMPORIA • PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

- ☐ Patiala House, Tilak Marg, New Delhi-110001
- ☐ Super Bazar, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110001
- ☐ Hall No. 196, Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054
- ☐ Commerce House, Currimbhoy Road, Ballard Pier, Mumbai-400038
- ☐ 8, Esplanade East, Calcutta-700069
- ☐ Rajaji Bhawan, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090
- ☐ Press Road, Thiruvananthapuram-695001
- ☐ State Archaeological Museum Building, Public Gardens, Hyderabad-500004
- ☐ 1st Floor, 'F' Wing, Kendriya Sadan, Koramangala, Bangalore-560034
- ☐ Bihar State Co-operative Bank Building, Ashoka Rajpath, Patna-800004
- ☐ 27/6 Ram Mohan Roy Marg, Lucknow-226001

Sales Counters

- ☐ C/o PIB, C.G.O. Complex, 'A' Wing, A.B. Road, Indore (M.P.)
- ☐ C/o PIB, 80, Malviya Nagar, Bhopal-462003 (M.P.)
- ☐ C/o PIB, 7, Bhawani Singh Marg, , Jaipur-302001.

Contents

I. NATIONAL AFFAIRS

<i>India at an Important Juncture</i>	3
Address to the nation on the eve of Republic Day, New Delhi, 25 January 1995	
<i>Pandit Nehru : A Great Visionary</i>	6
At the unveiling of the statue of Pandit Nehru in the Parliament House, New Delhi, 26 January 1995	
<i>Archbishop Huddleston : A Champion of Anti-apartheid Struggle</i>	8
Presenting the 1994 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, to Archbishop Huddleston, New Delhi, 27 January 1995	
<i>Communalism Should Not Vitiating Politics</i>	11
Address at a session of the Parliament, New Delhi, 13 February 1995	
<i>Democracy Meaningless Without Socio-Economic Content</i>	21
Presenting the Ambedkar National Award, New Delhi, 13 May 1995	
<i>Citizenship Itself Is an Office</i>	24
Address to the Nation on the eve of Independence Day, New Delhi, 14 August 1995	
<i>Panchayats Have a Vital Role in Our National Life</i>	28
Addressing a sammelan of Panchayat Adhyakshas, New Delhi, 10 October 1995	
<i>Communalism Jeopardizes National Security</i>	32
Address to the nation on the eve of Republic Day, New Delhi, 25 January 1996	
<i>Indira Gandhi - A Committed Internationalist</i>	36
At the unveiling of the statue of Indira Gandhi, in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 27 January 1996	
<i>Self-help Must Manifest Itself on a Massive Scale</i>	39
At the foundation - stone laying ceremony of the Achuta Menon Centre and Library, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996	

<i>Our Strength Lies in Economy and Unity</i>	41
Addressing the Parliament session, New Delhi, 26 February 1996	
<i>Work to Realize Vision of Founding Fathers</i>	49
Unveiling the statue of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the portrait of Madhu Limaye in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 15 March 1996	
<i>India at the Crossroads of History</i>	53
Addressing a joint session of Parliament, New Delhi, 24 May 1996	
<i>With Freedom Comes Responsibility</i>	62
On the Goa Revolution Day, Panaji, 18 June 1996	
<i>Create Nation-wide Social Awareness</i>	67
Address to the Nation on the eve of Independence Day, New Delhi, 14 August 1996	
<i>Give-and-Take Policy will Help Resolve Problems</i>	71
Unveiling the statue of N.T. Rama Rao and presenting the NTR Film Award, Hyderabad, 1 November 1996	
<i>Independent Judiciary is Vital to Democracy</i>	75
At the inauguration of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Constitution of the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi, 9 December 1996	
<i>Netaji : Stalwart of Our Freedom Struggle</i>	80
Speech at the unveiling of the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the Parliament House, New Delhi, 23 January 1997	
<i>"May India Be Glorious"</i>	83
Address to the Nation on the eve of Republic Day, New Delhi, 25 January 1997	
<i>Social Change through Women</i>	86
Inauguration of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics", New Delhi, 14 February 1997	
<i>Krishna Menon : A Many-sided Personality</i>	90
Speech at the birth centenary celebration of V.K. Krishna Menon in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 6 May 1997	

<i>Dr. Zakir Hussain - A Many - Splendoured Personality</i>	94
Speech at the birth centenary celebrations of Dr. Zakir Hussain, New Delhi, 7 May 1997	
<i>It is Not Winning Alone That Matters</i>	98
Speech at the inauguration of the Fourth National Games, Bangalore, 31 May 1997	
<i>Our Parliament - Symbol of Collective Striving for Common Goals</i>	99
Address at the farewell hosted by Members of Parliament, Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 22 July 1997	
<i>Farewell with a Sense of Fulfilment and Optimism</i>	101
Farewell Address to the Nation, New Delhi, 24 July 1997	
 II. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	
<i>Social Revolution through Traditional Arts and Crafts</i>	105
Presenting National Awards to master craftpersons and weavers, New Delhi, 9 January 1995	
<i>Equitable Distribution - A Must</i>	107
Inauguration of the Indian Machine Tools Manufacturers' Association (IMTEX), New Delhi, 14 January 1995	
<i>Technological Progress Vital to Growth of Industry</i>	110
At the inauguration of the 11th Indian Engineering Trade Fair, New Delhi, 11 February 1995	
<i>Rejuvenate Rural Economy</i>	113
Inaugurating Exhibitions, AGRI-EXPO and AHARA, New Delhi, 8 March 1995	
<i>Towards Improving Global Economy</i>	116
Inaugurating MANTECH and INDIA INTECH-MART Exhibitions, New Delhi, 24 March 1995	
<i>Small-Scale Industry - A Growing Force</i>	120
Inaugurating "Vision 2001 - Small Industries", to commemorate the completion of the 40th year of the National Small Industries Corporation, New Delhi, 19 April 1995	

<i>International Trade - Quality for the Consumer</i>	123
At the inauguration of The India International Trade Fair, 1995, New Delhi, 14 November 1995	
<i>Ensure Maximum Safety for Miners</i>	125
Presentation of the National Safety Awards (Mines) for 1993, New Delhi, 11 December 1995	
<i>Harmony between Man and Nature</i>	129
Inauguration of the Agri-Horti Expo 1996, on the occasion of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India completing 175 years, New Delhi, 1 March 1996	
<i>Postal Service, a Humane Social Service</i>	133
Presentation of the Meghdoot Awards for excellence in Postal Services, New Delhi, 13 March 1996	
<i>Small-Scale Sector - Engine of Growth in National Economy</i>	137
Speech at the presentation of National Awards, 1996 to outstanding small-scale entrepreneurs, New Delhi, 17 July 1997	
 III. HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE	
<i>AIDS : A National Health Concern</i>	143
At the International Conference on AIDS, Drugs and Alcohol, New Delhi, 23 January 1995	
<i>Give Every Child a Better Future</i>	145
At the presentation of National Awards for Child Welfare-1994, New Delhi, 3 April 1995	
<i>Global Cooperation Essential for Human Progress</i>	148
Inaugurating the eleventh APOSHO conference on Safety, Health and Environment : Workable Solutions, New Delhi, 16 November 1995	
<i>Service to Humanity - A Fundamental Truth</i>	151
At the inauguration of the Sri Sathya Sai drinking water project, Puttaparthi, 23 November 1995	
<i>Succour to the Disabled</i>	155
At the presentation of National Awards for the Welfare of the Handicapped, New Delhi, 3 December 1995	

<i>Prevention is Better Than Cure</i>	158
While laying the foundation-stone of the Holistic Super Specially Hospital, Pudukad, 15 February 1996	
<i>Cardiac Diseases - Treatment and Cure</i>	160
Inaugurating the annual conference of the Indian Association of Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeons, New Delhi, 25 February 1996	
<i>Population Growth Impedes Progress</i>	165
On the occasion of the World Population Day, New Delhi, 11 July 1996	
<i>Red Cross in the Service of People</i>	168
Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Karnataka Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, Bangalore, 21 March 1997	
IV. EDUCATION, ART AND CULTURE	
<i>Power of Youth - Key to Our National Revival</i>	173
Inauguration of the Rashtriya Yuva Utsava, Bhopal, 12 January 1995	
<i>Dweep Mahotsava - In the Cultural Life of Andaman and Nicobar Islands</i>	175
Inauguration of the Dweep Mahotsava, Port Blair, 16 February 1995	
<i>Music Transcends All Barriers</i>	178
Presentation of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards, New Delhi, 16 October 1995	
<i>Human Resources Can Be India's Greatest Asset</i>	181
Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of Modern School, New Delhi, 21 October 1995	
<i>Tribute to Rajaraja Varma - Great Son of Kerala</i>	184
Unveiling the statue of A.R. Rajaraja Varma, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996	
<i>"Truth Shall Make You Free"</i>	188
Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Union Christian College, Alwaye, Ernakulam, 14 February 1996	
<i>Importance of Sports in National Health</i>	192
Inauguration of the International Stadium, Kochi, 14 February 1996	

<i>Goa - A Tapestry of Interwoven Cultures</i>	196
Inauguration of the Goa State Museum, Panaji, 18 June 1996	
<i>Message of Lord Buddha for Progress of the World</i>	198
Convocation address at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, 18 June 1996	
<i>Role of Teachers in India</i>	211
Presentation of National Awards to Teachers, New Delhi, 5 September 1996	
<i>Literacy Is a Key to Self-discovery</i>	216
Speech at the thirtieth anniversary of the International Literacy Day, New Delhi, 8 September 1996	
<i>Adi Sankaracharya - Seer of All Times</i>	220
Speech on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Adi Sankaracharya, Kancheepuram, 20 September 1996	
<i>Maulana Azad - Man of "Luminous Intellect"</i>	227
Speech at the presentation of awards for the Maulana Azad Essay Competition for 1994-95, New Delhi, 11 November 1996	
<i>A.T. Ariyaratne - 'Gandhi' of Sri Lanka</i>	229
Speech while conferring the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1996 on Dr. Ariyaratne, New Delhi, 1 January 1997	
<i>Tyagaraja - Symbol of Total Surrender to Divinity</i>	233
Speech at the inauguration of the 150th Aradhana festival of Saint Sri Tyagaraja Swamigal, Thiruvayyar, 20 January 1997	
<i>ISKCON : A Blend of Tradition and Modernity</i>	239
Speech at the inauguration of the Centre for Advancement of Culture of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Bangalore, 31 May 1997	
 V. MASS MEDIA	
<i>Introspection on the Role of Cinema Necessary</i>	245
Presentation of the 42nd National Film Awards, New Delhi, 17 July 1995	

<i>Press in India - A Potent Force</i>	247
Foundation - stone laying ceremony of the Trivandrum Press Club's new complex, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996	
<i>Cinema As a Catalyst in Social Change</i>	250
Presentation of the 43rd National Film Awards, New Delhi, 6 August 1996	
<i>Press Must Exercise Restraint</i>	253
Inauguration of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Press Council of India, New Delhi, 16 November 1996	
<i>Films Should Be Utilized to Foster Social Change</i>	258
Speech at the presentation of the 44th National Film Awards, New Delhi, 15 July 1997	
 VI. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	
<i>Science - A Quest for Truth</i>	263
Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 7 January 1995	
<i>Build Infrastructure for Sustainable Growth</i>	266
Inauguration of the Tenth Indian Engineering Congress, Jaipur, 20 December 1996	
<i>Strive to End Hunger by 2000 AD</i>	270
Inauguration of the 2nd International Crop Science Congress, New Delhi, 17 November 1996	
<i>Information Dissemination - Essential for Agricultural Productivity</i>	274
Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, New Delhi, 19 December 1996	
<i>Scientific Knowledge - Not a Commodity</i>	277
Inauguration of the Jubilee Centre of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 31 December 1996	

VII. DEFENCE

- No Development Without Security* 285
Addressing defence personnel at I.N.S. UTKROSH,
Port Blair, 16 February 1995
- Military Technology Vital* 286
Addressing the Eastern Naval Command,
Vishakhapatnam, 6 October 1995
- Navy : In the Defence of National Interests* 288
Speech at the Presentation of Colours to the Western
Fleet of the Indian Navy, Mumbai, 9 March 1997
- RIMC : Preparing Students For Defence Services* 292
Speech at the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the
Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, 13
March 1997

VIII. INDIA AND THE WORLD

- Nelson Mandela : A Toast to Spirit of Freedom* 299
At the banquet in honour of the President of the
Republic of South Africa, Dr. Nelson R. Mandela,
New Delhi, 25 January 1995
- Sanskrit - An Eternal Ocean of Knowledge* 301
At the conferment upon Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma
of the 'Honoris Causa' degree of Mahamahopadyaya
by Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati, New
Delhi, 20 March 1995
- India and Sri Lanka - Democracies Committed to Nur-
turing Diversity* 304
Banquet in honour of the President of the Democrat-
ic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Her Excellency
Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, New
Delhi, 25 March 1995
- India for Cordial Relations with Iran* 306
Banquet in honour of the President of the Islamic
Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Hashemi
Rafsanjani, New Delhi, 17 April 1995

<i>A Shared Heritage of Unity</i>	308
At the celebrations of the anniversary of the Indian arrival in Trinidad and Tobago, Nagar Site (Trinidad and Tobago), 30 May 1995	
<i>India and Namibia Bound by Spirit of Freedom</i>	310
At the Parliament of the Republic of Namibia, Windhock, 5 June 1995	
<i>India - Zimbabwe Joint Efforts for Human Progress</i>	313
Banquet hosted by His Excellency Dr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Harare, 7 June 1995	
<i>Role of UN in Promoting World Peace</i>	316
At the release of the Commemorative Stamp/First Day Cover to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, New Delhi, 26 June 1995	
<i>Regional Cooperation - A Step towards Globalisation</i>	318
Inaugural session of the Regional Meeting of the Ministers of Industry of the Asia Pacific Region, New Delhi, 19 October 1995	
<i>Myanmar Echoes Nehru's Voice of Freedom</i>	322
Conferring the 1993 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding on Madame Aung Suu Kyi, New Delhi, 14 November 1995	
<i>Dr. Nyerere - International Statesman and World Citizen</i>	325
Presentation of the Gandhi Peace Prize 1995 to Dr. Julius K. Nyerere, New Delhi, 27 January 1996	
<i>India and Korea : A Common Cultural Heritage</i>	328
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Kim Young Sam and Madame Kim, New Delhi, 24 February 1996	
<i>Indians Overseas Are Ambassadors of Culture</i>	331
At the Indian School, Muscat, 6 October 1996	
<i>India and Poland - A Bonding of Human Values</i>	334
Banquet hosted by His Excellency Mr. Alexander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw, 7 October 1996	

<i>India and Slovakia Bound by Common Goals</i>	338
Banquet hosted by His Excellency Mr. Michal Kovac, President of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava, 9 October 1996	
<i>Prague : Centre of a Rich Tradition</i>	340
Receiving the Golden Key of the city of Prague, 11 October 1996	
<i>Karlovy Vary - A Bohemian Centre of Arts and Culture</i>	342
At the Civic Reception, Karlovy Vary, 12 October 1996	
<i>Indo-Italian Friendship Is Eternal</i>	344
Banquet hosted by His Excellency Dr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, President of the Republic of Italy, Rome, 14 October 1996	
<i>India and Italy Must Strive for Global Peace</i>	346
Lunch hosted by His Excellency Dr. Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, Rome, 15 October 1996	
<i>Rome : Triumph of The Human Spirit</i>	348
Receiving the Keys of the city of Rome, Rome, 15 October 1996	
<i>Venice - A City of Splendour</i>	349
While receiving the Keys of Venice, Venice, 16 October 1996	
<i>India is Committed to South-South Co-operation</i>	350
Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Mr. Elsyee A. Kiemde, Ambassador - Designate of Burkina Faso, New Delhi, 8 November 1996	
<i>Indira Gandhi - A Unique Leader</i>	351
Presenting the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace Disarmament and Development - 1995 to General Olusegun Obasanjo, New Delhi, 19 November 1996	
<i>India and Finland Share Common Aspirations</i>	354
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Finland, His Excellency M. Marti Ahtisaari and Madame Eeva Ahitsaari, New Delhi, 25 November 1996	

<i>India Seeks Long-term Relations with China</i>	356
Banquet in Honour of the President of the Republic of China, His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, New Delhi, 28 November 1996	
<i>India and Malaysia Are Heirs to a Rich Tradition</i>	358
Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Dato Marzuki Mohammed Noor, High Commissioner-Designate of Malaysia, New Delhi, 7 December 1996	
<i>Conflict in Afghanistan : Common Concern for India and Kazakhstan</i>	360
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Mr. Nursultan A. Nazarbaev, New Delhi, 9 December 1996	
<i>India's Progressive Relations with the European Union</i>	362
Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Mr. Michael McGeever, Ambassador-Designate of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Union, New Delhi, 17 December 1996	
<i>SAPTA - A Milestone in South Asian Resurgence</i>	364
Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Mr. Choi Dae Hwa, Ambassador-Designate of the Republic of Korea, 12 December 1996	
<i>Jawaharlal Nehru - A Beaconlight of Peace</i>	366
While conferring the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 1994 on His Excellency Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, Prime Minister of Malaysia. New Delhi, 20 December 1996	
<i>India and Israel : Two Civilizations One in Spirit</i>	369
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Israel, His Excellency Mr. Ezer Weizman and Madame Reuma Weizman, New Delhi, 30 December 1996	
<i>India - A Staunch Friend of Cyprus</i>	373
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides and Madam Clerides, New Delhi, 10 February 1997	

<i>India and Namibia - Shared Perspective of Freedom</i>	376
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma, New Delhi, 14 February 1997	
<i>India Has Age - old Ties with Turkmenistan</i>	378
Banquet in honour of the President of Turkmenistan, Mr. Saparmurat A. Niyazov, New Delhi, 25 February 1997	
<i>India and South Africa : Shared ideals in Spirit of Freedom</i>	380
Banquet in honour of Dr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa and Her Royal Highness, Princess Zenani Mandela - Dlamini, New Delhi, 27 March 1997	
<i>India and Philippines Committed to Peace and Non-violence</i>	383
Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Philippines, Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, New Delhi, 3 March 1997	
IX. MESSAGES	
<i>Neglect of Girl Child Is A Blot on Society</i>	387
Message on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, New Delhi, 3 February 1995	
<i>Prosthodontics - Need for Primary Prevention of Disease</i>	388
Message to World Congress on Prosthodontics, New Delhi, 11 February 1995	
<i>Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave - A Unique Vision of Freedom</i>	389
Message for the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti and Acharya Vinoba Bhave centenary celebrations, New Delhi, 20 February 1995	
<i>Compassion, Truth and Love - Basis of All Religions</i>	390
Message on Centenary Celebrations of Ma Anandamayee, New Delhi, 25 February 1995	

<i>Women's Improved Status for National Progress</i>	391
Message to the Indian Red Cross Society on World Red Cross Day, New Delhi, 27 March 1995	
<i>Small Family Norm Vital to National Reconstruction</i>	392
Message on the occasion of World Population Day 1995, New Delhi, 23 June 1995	
<i>Dhyan Chand - A Life Dedicated to Sports</i>	393
Message for Dhyan Chand's birthday, New Delhi, 8 August 1995	
<i>Role of Teachers Is Crucial to Human Development</i>	394
Message for Teachers' Day, New Delhi, 14 August 1995	
<i>Exemplary Service of Indian Armed Forces</i>	395
Message for the occasion of Armed Forces Flag Day, New Delhi, 24 October 1995	
<i>Children Are the Future of India</i>	396
Message for Children's Day, New Delhi, 6 November 1995	
<i>Signal Contribution of Konkani to Indian Culture</i>	397
Message for the First World Konkani Convention, New Delhi, 12 December 1995	
<i>Prophet Mohammad's Teachings Have Eternal Relevance</i>	398
Message on the occasion of the birthday of Hazrat Mohammad, New Delhi, 17 September 1996	
<i>Advancement in Surgery Can Help Relieve Human Suffering</i>	399
Message at a conference of plastic surgeons, New Delhi, 20 September 1996	
<i>IAF - Sentinel of Our Skies</i>	400
Message on the occasion of the 64th anniversary of the Indian Air Force, New Delhi, 10 October 1996	
<i>Savings - Must for National Progress</i>	401
Message on World Thrift Day, New Delhi, 19 October 1996	

<i>Infantry - Largest Fighting Arm of Our Army</i>	402
Message on 50th Infantry Day, Secunderabad, 22 October 1996	
<i>Indian Navy - A Force to Reckon With</i>	403
Message on the 25th Navy Day, Secunderabad, 29 October 1996	
<i>Education Can Shape Population Patterns</i>	404
Message at a National Seminar of Parliamentarians on Food Security Population and Development, Secunderabad, 5 November 1996	
<i>Efforts to Check AIDS Must Be Global</i>	405
Message on World AIDS Day, New Delhi, 28 November 1996	
<i>India Exemplifies the Scientific Temper</i>	406
Message to the Indian Science Congress, New Delhi, 17 December 1996	
<i>The Disabled Must Get Full Attention</i>	407
Message at the International Day of the Disabled, New Delhi, 14 November 1996	
<i>Sardar Patel - A Fervent Nationalist</i>	408
At the function held by Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan to pay tributes to Sardar Patel, New Delhi, 2 January 1997	
<i>Sentinals of Our Democracy</i>	409
Message to the National Media Centre, New Delhi, 27 January 1997	
<i>Dr. Zakir Hussain : An Erudite Scholar</i>	410
Message on the occasion of birth centenary celebrations of Dr. Zakir Hussain by Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 30 January 1997	
<i>Morarji Desai - A Fearless Freedom Fighter</i>	411
Message for the birth centenary celebrations of Morarji Desai, New Delhi, 26 February 1997	
<i>Golden Jubilee of Indian Independence - A Momentous Occasion</i>	412
Message on the occasion of Indo-Asia bringing out a special commemorative issue on the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence, New Delhi, 12 May 1997	

<i>Delhi Legislative Assembly - 50th Year of Independence</i>	413
Message to Delhi Legislative Assembly for organising a number of programmes during the 50th year of Independence, New Delhi, 30 May 1997	
<i>Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Drug Abuse</i>	414
Message on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, New Delhi, 13 June 1997	
<i>Buddha's Message Must Imbue Our Action</i>	415
Message at the Third General Conference of World Buddhist Supreme Tathagatha Followers in Sri Lanka, New Delhi, 16 June 1997	
<i>Empowerment of Women for National Progress</i>	417
Message to Delhi Mahila Kalyan Samiti, New Delhi, 16 July 1997	

I
NATIONAL AFFAIRS

India at an Important Juncture

TOMORROW, WE CELEBRATE our 46th Republic Day. On this auspicious anniversary, I extend my greetings to all of you and to our countrymen beyond our shores.

January 26 is a momentous date in our history. It was on this day that our Constitution, framed by the representatives of free India, came into effect. This Constitution enumerated our rights and responsibilities while reflecting our dreams and aspirations. Its provisions have had a vital bearing on the development of our polity during the last 45 years. Republic Day is an occasion for us all to think about the state of our Union, to assess our achievements, and consider the challenges which we collectively face.

Our Constituent Assembly, in envisioning the India of the future, drew upon values which sustained our civilization from the very dawn of history. Democracy, Secularism and Social Justice represent the core of these values. The Preamble of our Constitution declares our commitment to securing for all citizens justice, liberty and equality. It affirms our belief in the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. These are not merely noble sentiments, but practical concepts which constitute the basis of modern Independent India.

Rights of human beings have a central place in our endeavour to build a polity sustained by law. Our Constitution guarantees Fundamental Rights to all our citizens : the right to equality and freedom, right against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights and the right to constitutional remedies. These provisions were inspired by the famous resolution moved at the Karachi Session of Indian National Congress in March 1931 by Bapu himself. Full observance of these rights is key to strengthening democracy.

The working of our democracy under the most challenging circumstances is a matter of pride. Though people did not initially believe in our capacity to run a democratic system, it is now regarded with admiration by the rest of the world. Indeed, our successes have

played no small part in the recent spread of democracy to other parts of the world. Many of the new democracies look to our legislative and electoral practices as examples to emulate.

The democratic process has ensured that our masses have a sense of participation in our development. By giving them a stake, we encourage each one to make a contribution to nation-building. Democracy must emanate from the grassroots. Only then can society respond to the specific requirements of our diverse people. Empowering panchayats and nagarpalikas reflect this commitment.

Elections are the practical manifestation of democracy. Each successful electoral exercise is a renewal of our democratic tradition. We have just completed elections to the State legislatures in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Sikkim. A number of other States are due to hold elections shortly. These elections demonstrate the smooth functioning of our democracy and are of profound significance.

Political processes require popular support. A sense of fairplay is particularly important in a democracy. Therefore, where distortions have crept in, corrective measures have to be taken in the larger interest. The faith of the people in the purity of the electoral process has to be constantly strengthened.

As mass communication and literacy spread, more and more people will pay attention to the working of the political system. The awareness of our masses must not be underestimated. People expect probity and sincerity from their elected representatives. We expect the system to perform and to be sensitive to our needs. We believe that standards of public life, set by our national movement, must not be eroded. It is only then that the commitment to foster democracy can be fulfilled.

History, religion and culture have bequeathed to the people of India a common legacy that is shared by all of them. Pluralism has been our way of life. The Indian ethos has evolved with a history of co-existence and respect for differences. Narrowness of thought is not a part of this inheritance. National integration requires emphasizing commonalities and building on shared values. Even as we seek to strengthen unity, attempts to fragment society and accentuate differences, continue. These manifest themselves in communalism, chauvinism and in casteism. All these are equally dangerous to our unity and solidarity. Parochial loyalties must, therefore, be overcome.

After Independence, India has undoubtedly made significant progress. But we must recognize that political freedom is not complete without economic freedom. Our task is to ensure that all our people are freed from want and provided with the basic amenities of life. Material advancement is one aspect of our progress; the elimination of the inequities of the past is another. As we build a just society, meeting rising aspirations is a significant challenge before us.

Our country is today at an important juncture. Growing demand and higher expectations necessitate expansion of the economy. Living standards can be improved only by effective application of science and technology to our daily lives. Judicious interaction with other economies will make our own economy more competitive as well as efficient. As we move towards a more open economy, we have to make every effort to develop our human assets.

India and its people have always nurtured a vision of a humane society. We define progress not by the wealth of the elite but by the welfare of the masses. In undertaking reform, it is important that its benefits accrue to all sections of society. Only then the national consensus on vital issues can be strengthened.

As we chart our future course, we will do well to draw on the rich legacy of our national movement. Our struggle was uniquely non-violent. Non-violence did not derive from weakness, but from faith in ourselves. An extraordinary mass discipline under the inspiration of Bapu resulted in our success.

A nation which could strive with such steadfastness for its freedom can surely bring to bear the same discipline to the task of national development. Let it now be reflected, for example, in our work ethos and productivity. Let it be revealed in a better civic sense, so that diseases like plague can be avoided in the future.

“Freedom brings its own responsibilities and burdens,” said Pandit Nehru, “and they can be shouldered only in the spirit of a free people, self-disciplined and determined to preserve and enlarge that freedom.”

The freedom that we have attained at such cost has to be defended against external forces. Those who threaten our unity have sought, through terrorism, to still the democratic process. These attempts can never succeed. India wishes to live in peace with all its neighbours. But our resolve to protect our vital interests must not be underestimated.

When the national tricolour unfurls tomorrow, on Republic Day, let us salute the flag of freedom and sacrifice, and strive for the greater glory of India. Let each one of us take a pledge to live up to our duties and responsibilities, conscious that we represent a great nation with a great destiny.

Pandit Nehru : A Great Visionary

I AM VERY happy to be associated with the unveiling of Pandit Nehru's statue in the Parliament House. Panditji was one of the founders of our parliamentary democracy and did much to shape the working of the parliament in its formative years. My pleasure is greater as we have in our midst today His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa, and a statesman in the tradition of Panditji himself.

Jawaharlal Nehru had an extraordinary mind with a wide range of interests. It is natural that each of us have our own image of him, reflecting some facet of his diverse contributions. He was our first Prime Minister and indisputably, the architect of modern India. He was Bapu's chosen disciple and a leader, in his own right, of our national movement. This Parliament is testimony to his key role in our democracy. He was a great visionary who laid the basis for our industrial development. Our scientists know him as a builder of institutions, our teachers as an educationist, and our artists for his revival of our ancient heritage.

In India and abroad Panditji is remembered for his role in the anti-colonial struggle, his advocacy of non-alignment and his commitment to world peace. He was a humanist and internationalist in the true sense of the term. He believed deeply in the indivisibility of this one world of ours, a concept so eloquently expressed by the inscription at the gate of this Central Hall facing Panditji's statue—

अयं निजः परोवेति गणनां लघुचेतसाम्।

उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

This is mine, that is his -
is the outlook of lesser minds,
The virtuous and wise recognise
all humankind as one family.

The freedom struggle was already underway in our country when Jawaharlal Nehru joined its ranks. He brought to it a passion and a commitment which energised an entire generation. His entry into the political arena strengthened the forces demanding Complete Independence. In 1928, at the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress, he raised his voice against his own father Pandit Motilal Nehru who, as the Congress President at that time, advocated Dominion Status. The Lahore Congress in 1929 was a turning-point in our history when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Presidential address, declared complete freedom as our national aim.

Pandit Nehru was convinced that our freedom movement was part of a global struggle against colonialism. He believed that India's Independence would remain incomplete so long as other nations remained under the colonial yoke. Apartheid was one of the abhorrent practices of the colonial era and it had no more implacable a foe than Jawaharlal Nehru. Racism, he declared, had become a State doctrine in South Africa. He warned : "If this racial doctrine is going to be tolerated, it must inevitably lead to vast conflicts and world disaster."

One of Panditji's earliest foreign policy decisions in 1946, was severing trade ties with South Africa and withdrawing our High Commissioner. This was followed by a complete boycott of the racist regime. Panditji's role in the pressures leading to the withdrawal of South Africa from Commonwealth is well known.

The racial discrimination, which South Africa then symbolised, was opposed by Jawaharlal Nehru not merely as an Indian, but from the viewpoint of humanity as a whole. He emphasised that : "It is a policy with which obviously no person and no country which believes in the UN Charter can ever compromise, because it uproots almost everything the modern world stands for and considers worthwhile"

Nehru's India was the first nation to take up the issue of apartheid at the United Nations. When apartheid finally crumbled, it was in no small measure due to the sustained international

pressure initiated by Panditji. The presence in the Central Hall of Parliament of the first citizen of free multiracial South Africa today gives us particular satisfaction.

Unflinching in his struggle against injustice, Pandit Nehru was equally far seeing when it came to the task of rebuilding our society. He knew that this could only be achieved through respect for differences and by seeking a consensus. Only then would unity emerge from diversity. Democratic politics was fundamental to Panditji's thinking. It was, for him, a practical manifestation of Ahimsa, reflecting a tradition that went back to the *Rig Veda*.

Democracy requires a high degree of self-discipline and tolerance. Panditji often emphasised : "Freedom demands respect for the freedom of others". As Prime Minister, he assiduously built up a democratic political culture. His concern for the sensitivities of the Opposition was manifest. Deeply conscious of his parliamentary responsibilities, he made it a point to be present, even in declining health, for the Question Hour. The conviction that means are as important as the end permeated all Panditji's actions. Respect for the rule of law and parliamentary democracy are his enduring legacies. Let us build on it.

Archbishop Huddleston : A Champion of Anti-apartheid Struggle

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to present the Indira Gandhi Prize 1994 for Peace, Disarmament and Development to Archbishop Trevor Huddleston in recognition for his contribution to the struggle against apartheid.

"We believed", said Indira Gandhi, "that freedom was indivisible and that all freedom struggles were ours." These words encapsulate the life and deeds of Archbishop Huddleston who made the anti-apartheid struggle his own. In the same spirit, we welcome here today the symbol of human dignity in South Africa, Dr. Nelson Mandela.

Presenting the 1994 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, to Archbishop Huddleston, New Delhi, 27 January 1995

India's interest in South Africa goes back to the last century with the transportation of indentured labour from our country. Our bonds were forged by the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who in his struggle against colonial rule there, fashioned non-cooperation as a potent political force. Oppression in South Africa naturally became part of our political consciousness when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India. Drawing from the experience in South Africa, our freedom struggle took on the character of a mass movement with the will to defeat the colonial power through peace and non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi himself acknowledged that : it was "after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now. My love for South Africa and my concern for her problems are no less than for India." We, in this country, recognised the vital contribution which South Africa made to our national revival. Even as we sought Independence the fraternal struggle in South Africa was always on our minds.

It was natural that independent India should seek to discharge this debt to the South African nation. This took the form of vigorous mobilisation of international opinion against a system which openly declared that the colour of your skin is your passport. We raised the issue of racial discrimination before the United Nations, cut off diplomatic relations with South Africa, and imposed a complete boycott of the racist regime in all fields. Our pressures contributed to forcing that regime out of the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

Having grown up in the ethos of a freedom struggle herself, Indira Gandhi was an unrelenting opponent of the apartheid system. She was confident that if the world kept up its pressure, a way of life based on racial discrimination could not last. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, she saw the South African struggle as the last chapter of a global upsurge against colonialism, one so fundamental to the future of the civilized world that she had no doubt as to its eventual result. Indira Gandhi said, "This idea of freedom cannot be stamped out. Some spark will persist to burst into flame, somewhere, sometime, to light the way and illuminate hearts . . . No matter what laws South Africa devises for itself, history cannot be denied, nor will the inexorable march of the future be halted. Apartheid cannot survive." How right she was !

In the long battle against apartheid, we recognised in Archbishop Huddleston a fellow crusader who did not hesitate to denounce evil and injustice. His forthright stance was all the more remarkable as at that time, few people in the West understood the enormity of the oppression which apartheid represented. Even as the world's attitude began to harden towards the racist regime, there were attempts to justify, excuse or even covertly assist it. Mists of confusion were deliberately created. For, as St. Paul said, "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?" It is to the credit of Archbishop Huddleston that he dispelled any illusions about the reform of apartheid and revealed to the world its true and unacceptable face.

The Archbishop is today part of South Africa's history. His opposition to the forced removal of the black community from Sophiatown is well known. His decision to close St. Peter's School rather than, hand it over to the Government, was a courageous act and widely appreciated. His book *Naught for Your Comfort*, published on his return to England, stirred the conscience of even the most indifferent. As a founder, Vice-President and President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, he was largely responsible for creating worldwide awareness of the sufferings which apartheid brought on the South African people. The mass protests he organised discouraged attempts to assist the racist regime and dilute sanctions against it.

Archbishop Huddleston's uncompromising opposition to apartheid is best explained in his own words: "I believe that because God became Man, therefore human nature in itself has a dignity and a value which is infinite. I believe that this conception necessarily carries with it the idea that the State exists for the individual, not the individual for the State. Any doctrine based on racial or colour prejudice and enforced by the State is therefore an affront to human dignity and *ipso facto*, an insult to God himself."

This message inspired the people of Africa and prompted others to come forward in their support. Archbishop Huddleston's voice was loud and certain in condemnation of apartheid, when others wavered. He spoke and acted, where others preferred to avert their eyes. By doing so, he became part of the conscience of the world, unwilling to accept or legitimise a system which denied people their most basic rights.

Archbishop Huddleston is indeed a worthy recipient of the

Indira Gandhi Prize 1994. Given his long association with India, his selection is a matter of particular satisfaction for us. In honouring him today, we reaffirm our commitment to the universal values of democracy, secularism and social justice which Indira Gandhi symbolised and strove for in his lifetime.

Communalism Should Not Vitiating Politics

AS I STAND to address you this year I note that the optimism and self-assurance evident last year has been vindicated. The projections made have been fulfilled in substantial measure and it can be said with confidence now that the country has made the turn-around initiated by the new economic and other policies of the Government. The people have responded handsomely by reasserting their faith in social stability. Political parties have also contributed to strengthening democracy and fundamental values such as the rule of law. Our country has improved its standing in the global community and now stands poised to become one of the rapidly growing economies of the world.

The law and order situation continued to be under control in 1994-95. There was no major communal riot in the country and incidents of violence were fewer. Polls in Goa, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra have been peaceful. Government is determined to be watchful, particularly in respect of the secessionist and communal forces that pose a threat to the unity and integrity of the country.

On the Ayodhya issue, one of the noteworthy developments is that the Supreme Court delivered its judgement on the reference made to it. It has upheld the validity of the Acquisition Act, but not the provisions relating to abatement of the pending suits. The disputed area is vested in the Central Government which is now to act as a statutory receiver for maintaining the status quo until the disposal of the revived suits. Compliance with the decision of the

court is essential. The judgement recognises the possibility of a resolution of the dispute through negotiations. It is of utmost importance that the improved atmosphere leads to a lasting solution to this dispute and we collectively ensure that communalism does not vitiate politics.

A separate department of J&K Affairs has been set up under the Prime Minister. Vigorous efforts have been made to step up the pace of the development and economic activity in the State. The Government has ensured availability of adequate funds to the State and will regularly assess its needs sympathetically, in terms of the resources required for its developmental needs. The objective of revival of the democratic process is also being pursued. The delimitation of constituencies is being done and the work of revision of the voters' list has been taken up by the Election Commission. Operations against militants are being intensified. The attempts by militants to disrupt the Amarnath Yatra were successfully foiled by the administration. In spite of the trying conditions, the security forces are showing restraint and are sensitive to the feelings of the local people. Delegations of diplomats and parliamentarians visited the State and interacted freely with various sections of the people. This continuing transparency has generated overall confidence.

In the North-East, the Government is pursuing its policy of dealing firmly with insurgent activities. At the same time, efforts are being made to encourage these disruptive elements to abjure violence and join the national mainstream. The Government of Mizoram signed an accord with Hmar People's Convention resulting in surrender of militants. There has been similar surrender by ULFA militants in Assam.

An agreement was signed in September 1994 providing for a Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council. A new Bill incorporating the provisions of the agreement has been passed by the Bihar Assembly.

The Government is seized of the issues that have arisen in the hill areas agitation in Uttar Pradesh and is confident that given patience and sympathetic handling by all concerned, acceptable solutions will be found.

The National Human Rights Commission carried on its work with dedication. The Government stands committed to its policy of promotion and preservation of human rights.

The economic reforms have brought about an upswing in the economy. During 1994-95, the gross domestic product, at constant prices, is expected to increase by 5.3 per cent, as against 4.3 per cent last year. Industrial revival started with an 8 per cent increase in production in the first half of 1994-95. Foreign Exchange reserves rose from \$ 15.1 billion on 31.3.94 to over \$ 19 billion in the last week of January 1995. The Government was in a position to repay about \$ 1.1 billion to the IMF ahead of schedule. As a consequence of the strong revival of the industrial sector, imports increased by 23.90 per cent. Exports have also grown by 16.9 per cent in dollar terms. The rupee continued to remain stable and was made convertible on Current Account.

The Government is concerned about the increase in prices, especially of articles of mass consumption. The price situation is being watched closely and measures are being taken to prevent shortages. In the case of some commodities, like sugar and edible oil, prices had risen mainly due to insufficient domestic production. The comfortable foreign exchange position has enabled imports to augment supplies and control the rise in the prices. In the case of wheat and rice, open market sales out of public stocks of foodgrains held by the Food Corporation of India have also been undertaken. The Public Distribution System and Revamped Public Distribution System are also being used to provide assistance in making essential commodities available. Further efforts will be continued in this direction. Remunerative minimum support prices would continue to be assured to the farmers to safeguard the country's food security. As far as essential commodities are concerned, the Government will pursue the twin objectives of ensuring adequate availability and fair prices, with extra concessions for the poor.

The wide-ranging industrial de-regulation has evoked commendable response from entrepreneurs. More than 17,000 investment intentions have been filed since July 1991 totalling investment of over Rs. 3,50,000 crore with potential for direct employment for 3.4 million persons. Nearly 20 per cent investment intentions have so far been implemented and another 20 per cent are at various stages of implementation. These are estimated to generate direct employment to the extent of 1.4 million persons. Disbursements by our major financial institutions from April to December 1994 have shown a 39 per cent increase over the same period in the previous year. The growth of domestic initiative has generated interest amongst foreign investors and collaborators. The confidence

exhibited by foreign investors in the skills and resources of Indian partners is evident from the large foreign direct investment in joint ventures to the extent of 80 per cent. Cumulative foreign direct investment approvals since 1991 have exceeded Rs. 20,000 crore, the bulk of it in long gestation infrastructure projects. The Government continued with its policy of reforms and de-regulation in other sectors. The new Drug Policy and the Telecom Policy are steps in this direction.

The small-scale sector is an important component of our industrial base, its production level being Rs. 2,41,648 crore and generating an employment of 139 lakh persons. It recorded a growth of 7.1 per cent last year. Exports from this sector are around Rs. 24,000 crore, accounting for nearly 35 per cent of total exports. To meet the credit needs of this sector, the Reserve Bank of India had issued guidelines including the adoption of a single window scheme in 85 districts where small-scale units are concentrated, and setting up of specialised bank branches. The Government will enhance support to this sector further through liberal assistance for technology upgradation.

A high-power committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister has adopted an action plan for revitalising and improving khadi and village industries and generate additional employment for 2 million persons. A special employment programme would be undertaken in 50 selected districts and intensive development of 125 blocks in the country would be promoted.

Employment for the educated youth is the prime concern of the Government. The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana which is being implemented from 2 October 1993, was designed to provide self-employment for youth in the urban areas. It has been now extended to cover the rural areas also from this year. During the current year, 2.3 lakh educated youths will benefit from this programme, as against 31,797 last year. Banks have sanctioned loans to 69,483 entrepreneurs till 31 December 1994. The Government will provide loan to 7 lakh youths to generate 10 lakh employment opportunities before the end of the Eighth Plan period.

The production of nitrogenous fertilizers is expected to reach an all time record of 78.2 lakh tonnes in 1994-95, in terms of nutrients. Production of phosphatic fertilizers is expected to increase from 18.5 lakh tonnes in 1993-94 to 23 lakh tonnes in 1994-95, in terms of nutrients. The Government has continued with its

efforts to increase the domestic production of fertilizers with five new plants likely to commence production shortly.

The Government continued to give high priority to the development of the agriculture sector. The production of foodgrains is expected to increase from 182 million tonnes last year to 185 million tonnes in the current year. Disbursement of agricultural credit was Rs. 15,100 crore during 1993-94 and is expected to reach a level of Rs. 16,700 crore during 1994-95. The area covered under irrigation is expected to go up by 2.77 million hectares in 1994-95 bringing the total area under irrigation to 87.82 million hectares. The consumption of fertilizer nutrients during 1994-95 is estimated at 136 lakh tonnes showing an increase of about 10 per cent over the consumption of 1993-94.

The Government has been promoting diversification schemes in rural areas to provide higher incomes from occupations like horticulture and fishing. Accordingly, horticulture has been given an outlay of Rs. 1,000 crore in the current Five Year Plan. Fish production, which recorded an all time high of about 46.8 lakh tonnes in 1993-94, is likely to reach a level of 47.5 lakh tonnes during 1994-95. There has been a three-fold increase in export of agricultural products during the last five years.

Rural development is the central concern of all the developmental efforts of the Government. Sharply targeted rural development programmes underpin its employment strategy in poverty eradication. The central plan allocations for rural development schemes have been progressively enhanced during the last three years and the current year's allocation of Rs. 7,010 crore is the highest ever in our planning history. This large outlay goes to provide additional wage employment as well as self-employment through mobilisation of institutional finances on a large scale. Rs. 5,055 crore go to provide employment through the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and the Employment Assurance Scheme. For the Employment Assurance Scheme, an amount of Rs. 1,200 crore has been earmarked during the current year. This programme has been expanded from 1,778 most backward blocks of the country to 2,279 blocks in the current year. In addition to the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, an intensive JRY Programme focuses on 120 chronically backward districts. All these schemes together are expected to generate 1,470 million man-days of employment in the current year.

The asset-cum-loan based Integrated Rural Development

Programme which provides self-employment would cover about 2 million rural poor households from this year. The district and block level credit plans are being coordinated more effectively and the average investment per household is being increased to Rs. 12,000. Rs. 2,000 crore of institutional credit would be mobilised through a subsidy of Rs. 1,098 crore. These programmes will increasingly cater for the rural literate youth. Simultaneously, the Programme for the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas is being extended to all the districts and will now provide Rs. 25,000 against Rs. 15,000 hitherto, to women's groups to help them pursue economic activities and enhance group action in matters like literacy and family welfare, leading to women's empowerment.

As stipulated, by April 1994, all States amended their existing Panchayati Raj laws or have legislated new laws. Now it is necessary to hold elections and constitute panchayats at all levels. Some States have already made a beginning. In order to fulfil the high expectations of the people, the panchayats must be empowered with financial and administrative delegation. I call upon all the States to complete the panchayat electoral process without delay.

The Government recognises the need for an integrated programme to deal with the problems of urban poverty. This programme would include scientific disposal of urban wastes of all kinds. Voluntary organisations would be fully involved in its design and implementation. The Government is seeking to formulate a scheme for 345 Class II towns of the country that have populations ranging from 50,000 to one lakh.

The response from the States to the Special Component Plan for the Schedule Castes has been encouraging. The Central allocation to States to supplement their efforts this year is Rs. 273.85 crore. An important step taken last year was the constitution of the National Commission for *safai karmacharis*, to oversee the programmes aimed at the rehabilitation of the *safai karmacharis*. The Commission would address itself to rehabilitation programmes such as training, better mobilisation of institutional finances and the need for enhanced unit costs.

Efforts to strengthen and expand economic support programmes to the poor by the provision of margin money and loans through the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, have been stepped up as has been its authorised share capital from Rs. 125 crore to Rs. 300 crore.

The first step in providing for reservation of 27 per cent for the OBCs under the Government of India was taken in September 1993 and is under implementation. In order to ensure that the full benefits of this measure are available to the OBCs, the Government relaxed the standards required for OBC candidates to be on par with the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates and as a result, 1,873 additional OBC candidates qualified for the Civil Services Preliminary Examinations, 1994. The Government has also decided to extend the three—year age relaxation principle and to allow three additional attempts.

The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation became operational in September 1994 with an authorised share capital of Rs. 500 crore to promote the economic development activities of the backward sections amongst the minorities and to assist the upgradation of their technical and entrepreneurial skills. An amount of Rs. 25 crore has been provided during the current year to the Maulana Azad Education Foundation. The Foundation will set up residential schools for girls in low literacy slums and rural areas.

Certain new measures are under consideration of the Government for the protection of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and the disabled. These are inclusion of the SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 in the IX Schedule of the Constitution, setting up of a Commissioner under Article 339(1) of the Constitution to review the development strategies like the Tribal Sub-plan and other measures presently in operation for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Tribes so as to improve upon these strategies, legislation to provide equal opportunities to the handicapped in areas like education, vocational training and employment placements, and a Trust for the Welfare and protection of the mentally retarded.

In matters relating to women and children, the Government's approach has been to provide an enabling policy environment in which their concerns, particularly those of the girl child, are the central focus of planning. Priority is given to the empowerment of women, support services and nutrition programmes. The noteworthy achievements in this process have been the adoption of the National Nutrition Policy, the setting up of the National Nutrition Council and the National Creche Fund and implementation of the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana. The Mahila Samriddhi Yojana has had an impressive response. By December 1994, 72 lakh accounts had been opened with a total deposit of Rs. 65.90 crore. The National

Creche Fund will assist in starting 1,800 additional creches by the end of the Eighth Plan to provide day-care services to 45,000 children of working women and ailing mothers.

As part of the effort at covering the entire country with the Integrated Child Development Services Programme, it is proposed to cover 1,000 new blocks through Community Nutrition Centres in one lakh villages, as a first step, during 1995-96.

To achieve the goal of Education for All by 2000 AD, the Government will progressively raise the allocation to education so as to reach the target of 6 per cent of GDP. Total Literacy Campaigns are now operational in 312 districts in the country covering about 50 million learners in the 9-45 years age group. With the emergence of Total Literacy Campaigns, it is now being perceived that universal adult literacy is an achievable task.

The Government is determined to eradicate Child Labour progressively in all employments and, in hazardous industries, by the year 2000 AD. A National Authority for Elimination of Child Labour has been set up to coordinate actions of the core sectors of development administration such as education, rural development, women and child development, health and labour to devise integrated programmes that would bring about conditions conducive to withdrawal of children from employment and place them firmly in schools.

We are today in the forefront in the practical application of space technology in vital areas. The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle D2 and the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle—ASLV D4 demonstrated our capacity to place satellites into polar and near earth orbits. Our INSAT class of satellites are providing services in telecommunication, TV broadcasting, meteorology and disaster warning. The next satellite in this series, INSAT 2C, and the remote sensing series satellite, IRS IC, are planned for launch in 1995. It is heartening to note that India has been selected for the setting up of a UN Centre for Space Science and Technology Education to cater to the needs of the Asia Pacific region.

To meet the aspirations of the people to view programmes in their own language, Doordarshan has reconfigured its satellite service. Out of 14 channels, 11 satellite channels are now exclusively for programmes in regional languages.

The country continued to make strides in its efforts to harness

the power of the atom for peaceful purposes. With the completion of the sixth Indian designed and constructed nuclear power reactor—the second unit of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station, which achieved criticality on 8 January this year—the country once again proved its self-reliance in this advanced technology. There were also spin-offs from the use of nuclear technology, such as the production of nuclear-grade graphite, fabrication of medical lasers and development of parallel supercomputers.

Our Armed Forces maintained their vigilance in defending our international borders and maritime interests. They also made valuable contributions in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and in the North-East.

Abroad, the Army won plaudits for its contributions to the UN peace-keeping effort in Somalia, ably supported by the Indian Air Force and Navy, especially in the de-induction of forces.

In the conduct of international relations, we can view the past year with satisfaction. Existing friendships were reinforced and new understanding created around the world of our objectives and policies.

Our continuing support for the United Nations, which observes its 50th anniversary this year, is based on the premise that it is the most effective instrument for the realisation of humanity's common goals. India's initiatives at the United Nations included the need for the democratisation of the world body and the enlargement of the UN Security Council's membership to reflect contemporary realities. We proposed a Fourth Special Session on Disarmament to address post-Cold War issues of global security.

In our own region, we will be hosting the next SAARC Summit in April this year and look forward to working with our SAARC colleagues to further strengthen regional cooperation.

During the past year, closer bilateral relations with our neighbours continued to secure our attention. We welcome the new governments which assumed office in Sri Lanka and Nepal through multi-party democratic elections. We look forward to closer understanding and increasing cooperation with them, as with all our other neighbours.

Pakistan has however continued on its distressing path of confrontation with India and unacceptable interference in our internal affairs. We have taken repeated initiatives with Pakistan to settle all unresolved issues between our two countries according to

the Shimla Agreement. Our offer of such a dialogue still stands. Meanwhile, we regret the unilateral steps taken by Pakistan to close their office in Bombay and the Indian Consulate General in Karachi, thereby creating greater barriers to people-to-people contacts, and commercial, cultural and other relations.

The Government has worked to consolidate understanding and cooperation with old and new friends abroad. My State visits to Bulgaria and Romania renewed the close ties that have existed for decades between India and countries of Eastern Europe.

Our Vice-President visited Australia, South Africa and China and the visits reinforced our ties with these countries.

The Prime Minister's visits to the United Kingdom, USA, Russia, Vietnam and Singapore contributed significantly to the all-round enhancement of our ties with them.

The visit to the USA, which resulted in greater mutual understanding on matters of concern to the two countries, opened a new chapter in bilateral relationship. It laid the groundwork for resurgent Indo-US interaction not only in the political, economic and commercial fields but in other areas as well.

The Prime Minister's visits to the United Kingdom, Vietnam and Singapore testified to our desire to reinforce ties with our European and Asian partners.

India-Russia ties gained in substance and momentum during the last year. The Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States signed by President Yeltsin and our Prime Minister was a notable contribution to the conduct of interstate relations.

We recently welcomed President Nelson Mandela of South Africa as the Chief Guest for our Republic Day celebrations this year. His visit marks a new chapter in the building up of India-South Africa cooperation in various fields.

Our efforts to effectively project abroad the success of our economic management, on which depends the well-being of our people, and the beneficial changes that have taken place as a result of economic liberalisation, have received excellent response in countries abroad.

The momentum gathered by the country through these policies

has to be sustained to ensure that the benefits that have started accruing are not frittered away. A combined effort is necessary to strengthen the confidence of investors in our economy and of the people, particularly the underprivileged, in the economic reforms. The tone and tenor of your debates reflect and greatly influence both. I am confident you will set the pace with due regard to these objectives. I commend you to your tasks and wish you success.

Democracy Meaningless Without Socio-Economic Content

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today on the occasion of the presentation of the first Dr. Ambedkar National Award. Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar was a thinker and revolutionary who profoundly shaped the nature of contemporary Indian society. A noted intellectual and legal luminary, he dedicated his vast talents to the cause of social reform and nation-building. In seeking to realise the India of his aspirations, Dr. Ambedkar was active as a social worker, a political organizer, a prolific journalist and as a respected lawyer. His unflagging opposition to oppression and discrimination in our society made him a contemporary symbol of human dignity and emancipation.

It is a matter of gratification that the Government instituted the Dr. Ambedkar National Award as a special scheme on the occasion of his Centenary celebrations. The first such award, for the year 1993, is being presented to the National Institute of Social Work and Social Sciences (NISWASS) of Bhubaneswar. I extend my felicitations to the Institute on their being selected for this great honour.

In its two decades of existence, the National Institute of Social Work and Social Sciences has demonstrated its commitment to the welfare of the oppressed. Its goal has been to help secure for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of India, a document which bears the impress of Dr. Ambedkar's thought. The Institute's research has

helped formulate policies and programmes with a view to meeting the real requirements of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, established at NISWASS by the Government, signifies a commitment to developing programmes in accordance with his vision. I believe that the selection of this Institute as the recipient of the first Dr. Ambedkar National Award has been appropriate, and should serve to encourage other organizations.

In honouring the memory of Dr. Ambedkar today, we affirm our commitment to resisting the violation of basic human rights in our society. He is a reminder that a large part of our society undergoes indignities and oppression in its daily life. His significance has grown with time, because Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's very name represents our opposition to that outlook of casteism which had enfeebled our country over centuries. Dr. Ambedkar's message is specific to India, and yet, has a larger relevance. He symbolizes the rejection of oppression in the name of tradition and evokes the hope that the emancipation of the human spirit can never be checked. Panditji said of him in a tribute :

“The way he will be remembered most will be as a symbol of the revolt against all the oppressive features of . . . society. He rebelled against something against which all ought to rebel.”

Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's life is a saga of courage, determination and relentless struggle in the cause of humanism. The masses recognized him as an incomparable champion of the oppressed and down-trodden. Doctor Saheb's great and fundamental contribution was that he gave powerful expression to the inner need in India for a just social condition. He brought the predicament of the oppressed to the centre of our national consciousness. Future historians will recognize that Doctor Saheb *saved* India from sinking in a quagmire of centuries-old prejudice and injustice.

Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's mission of social reform gave essential and vital strength to India's unity. In his stirring address to the Constituent Assembly on 25 November 1949, he said :

“Castes are anti-national, in the first place, because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste. But we must overcome all these difficulties if we wish to become a nation in reality. For fraternity can be a fact

only when there is a nation. Without fraternity, equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint.”

Dr. Ambedkar had a larger vision of life and humanity. He never saw problems in narrow terms. Thus, even as he struggled in pursuance of a casteless society, he never lost belief in the Rule of Law as the only acceptable method of bringing about change. There is ample testimony to his extraordinary devotion to building a working democracy in the proceedings of our Constituent Assembly. Many questioned whether the poor, the illiterate and the homeless were fit to be granted democratic rights. Dr. Ambedkar had no hesitation on this score and was proved emphatically right by history. If we can today claim proudly to be a working democracy, this is in no small measure due to the vision of Dr. Ambedkar.

Protection of rights is the basis of all democratic polities. It was inevitable that on this question, Dr. Ambedkar's practical idealism was at its best. In the course of the Constitution-making process, he repeatedly stressed that it was remedies which made a right real. Speaking of Article 32 of the Constitution which dealt with remedies for enforcement of Fundamental Rights Dr. Ambedkar described it as “an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity . . . It is the very soul of the Constitution . . . and the very heart of it.”

Dr. Ambedkar is now inextricably linked in the popular mind to our endeavours in building a modern nation. He was one of the foremost advocates of the importance of social democracy and firmly believed that democracy would have little meaning unless it had an economic and social content. In a broadcast on 3 October 1954, Dr. Ambedkar declared: “Every man should have a philosophy of life, for everyone must have a standard by which to measure his conduct... positively, my social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words : Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.” He, therefore, sought to ensure that political power in independent India would not be a monopoly of a few, as in the past. He voiced the aspirations of the down-trodden, in words which now seem prophetic :

“These down-trodden classes are tired of being governed. They are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realisation in the down-trodden classes must not be allowed to develop into a class struggle or class war . . . Therefore, the sooner room is made for the realization of their aspiration, the better for the few, the better for the country.”

With tremendous emphasis he said :

“I am convinced that given time and circumstances, nothing in the world will prevent this country from becoming one nation.”

Let us, as our tribute to this universal man, strive to realise his vision and ideals.

Citizenship Itself Is an Office

ON THE EVE of our Independence Day—the anniversary of our regaining freedom—I have immense pleasure in extending to you and to Indians around the globe my warmest greetings and felicitations.

In our history, 15 August 1947 signifies the culmination of long years of struggle and sacrifice to restore to our ancient land its lost freedom. The quality characteristics of that struggle were determined by crystal-pure values cherished by our great national leaders. Thus the movement had a moral and ethical force which attracted nation-wide participation-unique in its magnitude, duration and discipline. At the heart of the struggle was a powerful national urge to uphold India's honour and win freedom. 15 August therefore represents the triumphant power of nation-wide commitment in tune with national ideals. Let us fully comprehend this aspect and draw lessons from it.

We pay our homage and tribute to the heroic martyrs and freedom fighters in the vanguard of that epic struggle. Their suffering and sacrifice awakened and inspired millions in the cities, towns, villages and hamlets of our vast country. It aroused in all—men and women, the old and the young, the rich and the poor—the zeal to persevere and march to victory. I recall some lines of a poem of that time evoking the spirit and atmosphere of the struggle :

“अपनी ताकत तौल सिपाही,
बलिदानों के अरमानों से !”

(Measure your strength Oh! fighter,
by the sacrifices you aspire to make!)

Similarly the popular folk song comes to mind :

“सर पे बाँध कफनिया,
शहीदों की टोली निकली !”

(With shrouds tied around their heads,
sallied forth the band of martyrs!)

Mahatma Gandhi symbolizes to us the values, vision, sense of purpose and willingness to sacrifice which characterized our freedom struggle. Bapu represents the participation of the common man, the masses, in this historic mission. This year we commemorate Bapu's 125th birth anniversary. As we pay tribute to his memory, let us maintain and develop that national resolve born under Gandhiji's leadership.

I said 15 August marks the culmination of a chapter of our struggle. It stands also for the commencement, from that auspicious day, of another mission, another national struggle. Growth with Social Justice is the goal of our national reconstruction. Rebuilding India, we strive for Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with our neighbours, and with nations and peoples around the world. We seek thus to make our rightful contribution towards a better future for all.

Forty-eight years after Independence, there is much that we can be proud of, much that strengthens our faith in ourselves. India today is advancing as a nation with tremendous range and capacity for growth : in Industry as in Agriculture, and in the tertiary sector. Already we have the world's second largest pool of technically trained human resources. We have the wherewithal for sustainable development. We have built institutions, developed systems and created scope for accelerated and balanced growth.

And yet there is no question that problems of poverty, illiteracy and disease beset us. We also have to tackle and eliminate the interconnected evils of communalism, casteism and corruption.

The task of nation-building, of safeguarding and enlarging the gains of freedom, involves a role of primary importance for each one of us. The freedom movement had depended on the whole-hearted, dedicated participation of every Indian. So does the task of making India great again.

Let us appreciate that citizenship itself is an office. Citizenship confers on individuals specific rights and safeguards as well as duties and responsibilities under our Constitution. The power of the people, the ultimate and the greatest power, is with us as citizens. That power has to be exercised. Vigilance, moderation and propriety must condition the use of the people's power. But it must be exercised in an appropriate way and on every necessary occasion.

Today, the Judiciary, the Press and voluntary organizations are rendering service of the highest value as active and effective bulwarks of democracy. Their interventions in public interest are greatly respected by the people. Indeed, the effect of their salutary work is to inform and mobilize public opinion for constructive action by citizens. We recognize also the contributions by many individuals and institutions devotedly at work. We are proud of them.

India has a wealth of idealistic, concerned, able and energetic women and men who have a sense of personal responsibility in tasks of national growth. They should, and must, be encouraged in exerting themselves and inspiring others to endorse what is right in public interest and oppose that which is not. Social service and action by citizens—supported by the Press and upheld by the Judiciary—can be a powerful force for national good. It can effectively strengthen the cause of cleansing and purifying national life and help fight and curb many evils — from gender inequities to crime, communalism and casteism.

Accountability to the people is a cardinal principle of our polity. It is our own awareness and initiatives that can make public administration, and its functionaries more intensively responsive and accountable. We have to organize ourselves to ensure that the mechanisms and instruments of governance do not swerve from the straight path of rectitude. Work must be done with a spirit of selfless service, a sense of propriety and professional efficiency. We

have to compel such performance of designated duties in service of the people.

Reform and restructuring acquire meaning only when the common man is benefited—when his quality of life improves and his burdens and worries diminish. We must aim at reducing economic and social disparities as a central objective in our endeavours for development. The inner strength of the people has to be summoned for this purpose and a constant vigil exercised. That is of the essence in our democracy.

We must reiterate our national resolve over a spectrum of other key issues. We shall zealously guard our freedom, national sovereignty and integrity. We shall fight and finish externally-sponsored terrorism and its nexus with the narcotics trade and organized crime. We shall maintain unflinchingly our opposition to discriminatory agreements in the field of nuclear and missile technology. Such consensus should extend to all issues of vital national interest. The world's largest Democracy can never yield to pressure.

We offer our hand of peace, friendship and cooperation to all nations—especially our neighbours in the sub-continent and other countries in Asia with whom we have ties of kinship and culture. Indeed, through cooperative endeavours we look forward to South Asia becoming a region of prosperity and progress. We, therefore, view with concern steps that can jeopardize our region's peace and stability. Our nation and the world are entering a new chapter of history which entails new imperatives of patriotic duty.

A critical national need in this respect is to generate a sense of resolve : faith in our cause, confidence in our abilities, a powerful nationwide determination to attain our goals, a ready willingness to commit ourselves totally to facing varied challenges attending our task.

Tomorrow, as we unfurl the national tricolour, let us dedicate ourselves to the glory of India and the good of all humankind. Let us strive to fulfil the dreams of those who gave their all for freedom. Let us pledge to serve so that we too may be regarded as having done our duty well.

Panchayats Have a Vital Role in Our National Life

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today at the Sammelan of Panchayat Adhyakshas.

Organized as part of the celebrations of the 125th birth anniversary of Bapu, it underlines the central place of panchayats in Bapu's vision of independent India. Realization of that vision through the effective working of Panchayati Raj would be the most appropriate tribute we can pay him.

The system of Panchayat Raj represents an essential element in our national ethos. It has withstood tremendous convulsions in our history. Panchayat Raj is a typically Indian concept. It evolved from the natural genius of Indian people and is naturally suited to our needs as we advance into the future. Bapu had referred to this in his book *My Picture of Free India*. He wrote : "Panchayat has an ancient flavour; it is a good word..... It represents the system by which the innumerable village republics of India were governed." Indeed, our traditions reveal a well-established heritage of decentralized democracy, which finds expression through our panchayats. The philosophy behind its working may be traced back to the *Rig Veda*, which states :

“सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पुर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥
समानो मंत्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तम् एषाम् ।
समानं मंत्रम् अभि मंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः
समानम् अस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥”

(Assemble; Speak with one another, Let your minds be of one Accord. May your Aim be common, your Assembly common; common the Mind; and the Thoughts of those United. A common Purpose do I lay before you; common be your Aim; and your Hearts united; May your Mind be one, so that All live happily Together.)

The names *Lokadhyaksha* and *Lokabandhu* in the *Vishnu*

Sahasranamam, and terms such as *Ganapati*, *Ganarajya* and *Ganatantra*, speak of a democratic outlook from very ancient times. The *Shanti Parva* of *Mahabharata* and the *Lalit Vistar* reflect its contribution to our systems of governance. Panchayats, which are the basic units of civic organizations in our villages, constitute the very backbone of this democratic system and it is their performance and service that will determine the welfare of the people of India.

Our national movement led by Bapu envisioned political independence as but the first step in the revival of India. It is realized clearly that two centuries of colonialism had contrived to distort our natural way of life centred in our villages. Bapu warned :

“If the village perishes, India will perish, too. It will be no more India.”

He, therefore, saw the revival of India as the revival of India's villages and their economy. He saw providing rural employment as putting life and blood into our villages.

He spoke of the poverty, the stagnation, insanitation and oppression in rural areas which robbed them of their vitality. The model villages he dreamt of had a rich life, in harmony with nature, where development would be reflected in skills, artistic talents, proper education and a sense of community feeling. In achieving these objectives, he visualized in panchayats the most effective of means.

We should fully comprehend and appreciate Bapu's practical idealism. He understood India. He had a clear vision of the future. He saw for panchayats a role of basic importance and envisaged them:

- managing and controlling social affairs and strengthening social unity;
- reflecting and voicing the villager's needs;
- as a mechanism of avoiding disputes and where necessary, settling them;
- ensuring speedy justice and dealing with public grievances;
- inculcating a sense of participation and raising education levels and awareness;
- and as a moral force, which would revive honesty and industry.

“The greater the power of the panchayats”, Bapu declared, “the better for the people.” He understood that in our villages, faith in this traditional institution ran deep and it was not without reason that they were called *Panch Parameshwar*.

He, therefore, proposed harnessing its capabilities to the national task of socio-economic change and noted : “When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do.”

Just as *khadi* was the ‘breath of national life’ and *charkha* ‘the soul of India’, for Bapu, panchayats were an institution which signifies the people's real and meaningful participation in shaping their own destiny.

They represented the means to manage public affairs and expressed unity and working together to solve common problems.

In a country as vast and diverse as India, it is obvious that a centralized government cannot adequately ascertain the specific requirements of our people. Panchayats are the critical mechanism by which the felt needs can be properly understood, articulated and responded to. If the benefits are to flow to the masses, local needs must be addressed by local power in the hands of local people. That is the essence of true democracy and of Panchayat Raj.

As panchayats strike deep roots once again in our society, we should appreciate the contribution they can make to the upholding of law and dispensing of speedy justice. When they increasingly tackle issues of basic concern to society, it will generate more and more public enthusiasm. A vigorous and vitalized Panchayat Raj can serve as a mass forum for the development of leadership qualities. It will encourage the exercise of people's rights and help in demanding performance from public administration. It will remind our citizens of their fundamental duties to themselves and to the nation. Panchayats can strengthen qualities of self-help and of self-respect, ideals so closely associated with Bapu.

Our commitment to Panchayat Raj is a legacy bequeathed by the freedom movement and enshrined in our Constitution. Article 40 of the Constitution states: “The State shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and to endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.”

With a view to materializing Bapu's vision, Panditji who had understood the importance of panchayats appointed a Committee on Democratic Decentralization of which I had the privilege to be a member. We envisaged village panchayats as having a major contribution to make towards community development. We felt that panchayats could increase employment, enhance agricultural production, strengthen self-reliance and cooperatives and use rural resources for community benefit. Panditji declared: "The progress of our country is bound up with the progress of our villages." It is with this deep-seated desire to empower our masses that the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution was passed.

Its results have begun to manifest themselves now. The holding of panchayat elections in almost all the States is an important step forward. I feel that the Central Government's consistent efforts in this direction deserve appreciation.

Even as panchayats strive to fulfil what has long been expected of them, they must be sensitive to new challenges which cast a special responsibility on them. At a time when India is undergoing major changes, it is clear that there should be more emphasis on grassroot initiatives and less on centralized control. Panchayats can make that happen more meaningfully.

Similarly, they can serve to correct any traces of elitist and urban-oriented bias which sometimes tinge decision-making processes concerning rural development. If India is to realise its full potential, place must be given to women and the weaker sections. Panchayats must enable the equal and effective participation of these groups in our national life. Reservations have been instituted to safeguard the position of the weaker sections and women, and to enable their empowerment and involvement in diverse sectors of national reconstruction. But reservation is not an adequate measure. Socio-economic realities are such that a number of laws, having a direct bearing on the socio-economic status and life of women and the weaker sections, need close re-evaluation and amendment. Such issues must engage the attention of our panchayats. Only then can we truly move towards a Welfare State, and Growth with Social Justice. Panchayats must reinforce our nation's tradition of service and selfless dedication to the welfare of the people. They must inculcate and stimulate the spirit of cooperation, respect for the viewpoints of other and the democratic outlook. Panchayats must ensure the unflinching progress of our

nation in building a just society liberated from the clutches of casteism, communalism and other moral infirmities. I see panchayats as providing for India the very moral and ethical foundation and dimension of service that can build the India of Bapu's dreams, the India that we, all of us, yearn for.

The nation and our people have high expectations of you all and your individual performance will help ensure the success of reviving our Panchayats. Always keep in mind your duty to society and carry it out with a sense of service that Bapu expected of all of us. As you return to your homes, remember that it is your commitment, dedication and efforts which will determine our future.

Let us pledge to take up this cause as a mission to fulfil Bapu's vision, to serve our motherland and to give some meaning to our lives.

Communalism Jeopardizes National Security

TOMORROW OUR NATION celebrates Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I have great pleasure in extending to you and all Indians beyond our shores my greetings and felicitations.

My comrades in the struggle for freedom would remember that 26 January had special emotional significance as Purna Swaraj Day. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the declaration of Purna Swaraj was a powerful expression of national resolve to attain complete freedom, independence and self-governance. The historic importance of 26 January is heightened by the coming into force of the Constitution of India on this date forty-six years ago.

Our Constitution, in essence, represents our national philosophy. The Constitution voices the social, economic and political covenant entered into by and for ourselves as equal citizens of our Republic.

On Republic Day we celebrate the pluralism, oneness, synthesis and harmony that are vital aspects of the very soul of India. Indeed these are our nation's defining characteristics—without which India would not truly be India.

It is essential that all of us appreciate, in full measure, the determinant values of our nationhood. More than ever, we as a people need to comprehend what it is that makes our nation, what sustains us, empowers our progress and gives to India a position of respect in the world as a whole.

Undoubtedly, there is colossal power innate to democracy and pluralism—democratic pluralism—oriented to achieve growth with social justice. We Indians must recognize this potential in ourselves as a people and be mindful of the conditions in which this nation-building energy can be manifested for the good of all.

We must nurture an environment for growth in which every individual can rise to her or his full potential—an environment in which the natural genius of the people of India can find unhampered expression. We must constantly safeguard and strengthen the atmosphere of oneness and common endeavour. That is of the essence in taking our great country forward.

In the context of the present global geo-political framework, it is crucially necessary that we have a clear understanding of our national interest. Pluralism has been central to India's intellectual and spiritual heritage from ancient times. Respect for all religions and recognition of all religions as equally valid paths to Truth, constitute a national tradition.

Today we must also appreciate that pluralism is an indispensable pre-requisite for national unity, and thus an essential pre-requisite for national security and meaningful progress. Communalism and narrow thinking, therefore, directly jeopardize national security. There should be wider cognition of this fact. This assumes greater importance now as the general security environment warrants a high level of vigilance and preparedness.

Indeed, communalism, casteism, corruption and criminalization are evils which we must resolutely overcome. Increasingly, it is evident that these contaminants are interconnected, and are operating in tandem.

The more deep-seated and unyielding these evils appear, the more necessary it is that the power of the people be mobilized to

expose and stamp them out. It is in the national interest to do so. These problems are neither endemic nor insoluble.

A radical, positive change can certainly be effected, provided concerted steps are initiated by public-spirited citizens, the Press, the Judiciary and the Executive authority.

A key element in such a movement for a cleaner public life would be the need for persons in prominent public offices to be in the forefront in setting a salutary example of rectitude and of high standards of personal conduct and accountability.

A clear and unwavering moral and ethical commitment to the securing of true progress, is a basic requirement for our advancing in the right direction. Let us recall these words of the Father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, "Economic progress should be harmoniously coordinated with real progress. By economic progress I mean material advancement... and by real progress is implied... ethical rejuvenation..."

Such an approach is all the more necessary as we endeavour to build the wherewithal of a competitive economy capable of securing our rightful position of eminence. We have to do this facing the visible and the hidden challenges of the global economic order—structured and managed at present mainly by the developed nations.

In the economic sphere we have witnessed significant growth of our GNP, and agricultural as well as industrial production. However, the task of ushering prosperity at all levels is stupendous. As we go ahead with our programmes for restructuring the economy we have to be careful to ensure that our policies bring direct benefits to the poorest and the weakest.

Development generates its own pressures. We have to devise and adjust mechanisms and processes to secure aggregate equities in the use of our national resources and in the patterns of growth. In this we have an invaluable advantage in terms of the viable democratic institutions and processes developed from the panchayat to the federal levels. Experience has borne out the value of democratic decentralization of power. We can take justifiable pride in our having constituted panchayats and local bodies in the rural and urban areas across the length and breadth of the country. Panchayati Raj has potential for building a modern and progressive India in harmony with the felt needs and aspirations of the people. The level of commitment, zeal, efficiency and integrity of those working

in these institutions will be crucial to their success - success in realizing the dream of the Father of our nation.

It is vital that all the organs and mechanisms of our democratic polity function effectively in an atmosphere of mutual trust, willingness to share and perception of common interest in each other's progress. Such a climate of creative cooperation is of great value at all levels.

In our federal polity, the needs of equitable use of resources and balanced growth are reflected in the interactions between the Central Government and the States and as between different States. The basic object should be to build a strong Centre for strong States. We have much to be proud of, and to gain, by resolving complex issues in the spirit of mutual accommodation. Let us remember the dictum :

“न अयं आत्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः”

(We must be strong and principled to realize our full potential.)

The great prospects and challenges ahead call for a resolute effort by all—the *kisan*, the *jiwan* and the *mazdoor* of whom we are very proud, and indeed by one and all. The women of India particularly must attain their due position as equal partners in every sector of nation-building activity.

In our parliamentary democracy, a major process to be undergone, before long, would be the elections to the Lok Sabha. Ours is the world's largest democracy. Elections are the life-breath of our system. Every care has to be taken to ensure that elections are free and fair and that the verdict of the people finds due and full expression. That is a sacred trust and responsibility which all of us as citizens share. The nation expects every entity and mechanism in our polity to perform respective designated roles harmoniously and with perfect constitutional propriety.

The message of India to our neighborhood and to the rest of the world has been and will be Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. The following verse expresses India's commitment from time immemorial to universal good :

“सर्वे अपि सुखिनः सन्तु
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाक् भवेत्॥”

(May all secure happiness
May all enjoy good health
May all experience
goodness ground them
Let none be in pain or sorrow)

Such had been India's outlook from our ancient past to the present day. We shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

Tomorrow on our Republic Day, when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom; let us remember the heroic sacrifices of the martyrs and freedom fighters and re-dedicate ourselves to our motherland.

Indira Gandhi—A Committed Internationalist

I HAVE IMMENSE pleasure in being present on this important occasion when we honour the memory of one of our great leaders. It is indeed fitting that a magnificent statue of an illustrious daughter of India, Indira Gandhi, is being installed in Parliament House, which embodies the hopes and aspirations of our people and society. Today we pay homage to a gifted person who toiled and worked in the service of our people throughout her life.

This likeness of Indiraji evokes a kaleidocope of memories. A flood of images and associations blur the mind. A myriad emotions wellup in one's heart. Many of us worked closely with her. We knew her over long years of triumph and of sorrow and tragedy. We saw her during moments of glory and of challenge.

For me personally, since I was closely associated with Indiraji, it is difficult to be objective. It is best left to historians and academicians to provide, for posterity, an assessment and evaluation of her contribution to public life and national reconstruction. Suffice it to say, she was a colossus amongst leaders who guided and shaped our national destiny.

In a sense Indira Gandhi symbolized the link between the old and the new, between our glorious freedom struggle and the eager and enthusiastic free India yearning to secure her rightful place in the world. She reflected, in her personality, the modern, youthful and progressive India, rooted in her ancient culture and traditions giving to the world from the wealth of its heritage and receiving in turn, dynamic impulses in the fields of science, technology, education, health, industry and agriculture.

A gracious lady with a steely determination and indomitable courage, Indiraji pursued untiringly the goals she had set for herself and for our country. One day before she fell to the assassin's bullets, she said : "I do not care whether I live or die. I have lived a long life and I am proud that it was spent in the service of my people. I am only proud of this and nothing else. I shall continue to serve until my last breath and when I die, I can say, that every drop of my blood will invigorate India and strengthen it."

Indiraji was a true nationalist who worked unswervingly for improving the life of the common man. She had a deep empathy for the underprivileged and those in distress. She was equally at home with the common people of our villages as she was in palaces of kings. Like her father, she maintained a very close and intimate link with the people. Many of us present here would recall the youthful images of Indiraji during her travels, wearing traditional costumes and singing and dancing with great zest with villagers and rural folk.

As I had said on her birth anniversary in 1987 when her portrait was unveiled in this historic Central Hall, India engrossed Indiraji. The national interest was her passion. Her knowledge of our heritage, her intuition of the inner pressures influencing events in diverse spheres, her feel for India's complex propensities—all these were amazingly direct and spontaneous.

Despite all odds Indiraji did not waver from the chosen path when she was convinced that it was in our best national interest. I recall the serene confidence with which she faced extremely complex and dangerous situations, such as the one in 1971. She remained undaunted by pressures and threats from abroad and stood firm as a rock in her duty.

In a speech at India Gate on 9 August, 1971, she said : "The path ahead is hard and difficult. It has been so for years and our difficulties might increase further. But I know that the greater the

difficulties, the greater will be our courage and strength... India is united and strong... The people are prepared for all sacrifices and hardships.”

Secularism was an article of faith with Indiraji. She perceived it as having emerged from our age-old ethos of tolerance and respect for all religions. She said : “Secularism and democracy are the twin pillars of our State, the very foundations of our society... The citizenship of India is a shared citizenship. Danger to even one single citizen... is a danger to all of us and, what is worse, it demeans us all.”

It is incumbent upon all of us, equal citizens of free India, to enable our vibrant pluralistic society to prosper. All of us must unitedly work to strengthen India and take our great country forward.

Smt. Gandhi was also a committed internationalist who sought for India her rightful and equal place in the international community. She became a world statesman, held in high regard and respect by her counterparts in other countries. She led a relentless crusade for peace, in every international fora—the Non-aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and United Nations. As she said :

“The most noble cause is that of peace in the world and fraternity in the human race.”

“Peace needs to be tended and safeguarded.”

“Like righteousness, peace protects us when we protect it.”

“No peace today: No life tomorrow.”

In the international arena, her championing the cause of disarmament, North-South dialogue and the protection and preservation of the earth's ecological heritage, brought widespread recognition and accolades. Her contribution in bringing the issues of concern to developing countries, on the agenda of the international community, was inestimable.

Indiraji was a person of great sophistication and charm, a true connoisseur of art and culture who was at home with all sections of our people and society. A student of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, she was deeply sensitive to the natural environment and cultural vibrancy of India. She was a global citizen who was proud of India's heritage and of the intermingling of her culture with other civilizations and traditions.

A sensitive and courageous daughter of a hero of our struggle for freedom and the architect of modern India, Indiraji always aroused strong feelings in every person she met. No one could remain indifferent to her. She lived up to the sage advice given to her by Pandit Nehru in a letter written from Naini Prison: "Reading history is good. However, it is better to help in making history."

It is a privilege for me to dedicate this statue of Smt. Indira Gandhi to the nation. Let us all strive collectively to continue our efforts for building a strong, secure, prosperous and progressive India of Indiraji's dreams.

Self-help Must Manifest Itself on a Massive Scale

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the C. Achuta Menon Centre and Library. We honour today a great son of Kerala and of India.

Achuta Menon may be rightly regarded as one of the builders of modern Kerala. As Chief Minister of the State for more than seven years, he was associated with a period of stability and growth. As an administrator, Achuta Menon had a reputation for integrity and efficiency. His stewardship of the State saw the implementation of important socio-economic programmes, particularly in the fields of land reforms, labour conditions and in low-cost housing. It was also a period when considerable progress took place in industrial development and science and technology.

Achuta Menon's guidance of the destiny of Kerala was a culmination of a life devoted to serving people. In his youth, he had been a freedom fighter and was imprisoned during the national movement. He was in the forefront of campaigns for the removal of untouchability and implementation of land reform. He served in the State government as a Minister for Finance, Agriculture and Home. He was also briefly a member of the Rajya Sabha. In all these capacities, Achuta Menon was guided by a vision of a

At the foundation-stone laying ceremony of the Achuta Menon Centre and Library, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996

progressive and humane society, where the dignity of all individuals would be equally respected.

It is appropriate, therefore, that the memorial to Achuta Menon should take the form of a voluntary social organization devoted to the realization of the ideals and values to which he was committed. In his last years, Achuta Menon focussed on rural development, appropriate technology and low-cost housing. These issues, I am given to understand, are among the objectives of the Achuta Menon Foundation, which also include gender justice, protection of weaker sections, enforcement of human rights, promotion of communal harmony, environment conservation and development of human resources. Each important in itself, they constitute together the basis of our national development. They remind us that our endeavour to free the masses from want and provide them the basic amenities in life is still incomplete. This challenge of securing and enlarging economic and social freedom must be faced with dedication and commitment.

Voluntary organizations have an important role in the task of nation-building, one which has only grown with time. Our national movement itself was an enormous voluntary effort aimed at raising popular awareness on issues of national concern. The significance of voluntary effort lies in the fact that it emanates from the grassroots. It symbolises, by its very nature, the consciousness and sensitivity of the people on issues of importance to them.

Today, it is important for all of us as citizens of India, to realise that we have duties and responsibilities which must be discharged. We must, individually and collectively, take the initiative and organize ourselves to meet the challenges of national reconstruction. The spirit of self-reliance and self-help must manifest itself on a massive scale.

The democratic process is based on ensuring that the masses participate in the development of society. In a country as large and as diverse as India, decentralisation holds the key to their effective participation. It is with this conviction that we have sought to empower local bodies which can respond to specific requirements and local conditions. In this context, voluntary organisations can play an invaluable role.

The Achuta Menon Centre, I believe, will also have a good Library. This will appropriately reflect his versatile personality, which included a passion for writing. As an author of considerable

repute who won the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, I am glad that his name will be associated with efforts to spread literacy and improve education.

Achuta Menon's life and deeds reflected his strong conviction in the power of the people. Committed to growth with social justice, he believed that their inner strength must be summoned for the safeguarding and enlarging of freedom and to address the varied challenges associated with national revival. Let us strive to realise his dreams.

Our Strength Lies in Economy and Unity

THE TENTH LOK SABHA has accomplished substantially its tasks and the country has been guided through momentous changes in every sphere. I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you for your dedicated service to the nation.

The nation celebrated the 125th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi which was marked by a large number of significant activities in different parts of the country and abroad. An important landmark was the institution of the Gandhi Peace Prize for Social, Political and Economic Transformation through Non-violence and other Gandhian methods. The first Gandhi Peace Prize was conferred upon Dr. Julius K. Nyerere. The Anniversary concluded with a solemn function on 31 January 1996 at the Bapu Kutir in the Valmiki Mandir Complex in New Delhi where Gandhiji used to stay.

The law and order situation in the country has been under control. The Government would continue to exercise extreme vigilance in the coming months to ensure that relations between different communities and groups continue to be harmonious.

Terrorism and insurgency have been curbed. Separatist tendencies have been contained to a very large extent. In this context the performance of the security forces has been creditable. However, the incident of arms drop in Purulia in West Bengal has highlight-

ed the need for constant vigilance. In this connection, investigation into the incident and its national and international ramifications, are being pursued vigorously. Steps are being taken to ensure effective policing of the air corridors of the country.

In Jammu and Kashmir, due to the concerted drive by security forces against militants and foreign mercenaries, coupled with the acceleration of development activities, there is a perceptible change in the overall situation. The revival of political activities has been made possible. Parliament passed a balanced budget in 1995-96 and for the first time in many years the Plan outlay is expected to be spent fully on development schemes without any diversion for meeting the Non-Plan resources gap. Though the Government had to seek further extension of President's Rule up to 17 July 1996, it remains committed to the restoration of representative Government in the State at the earliest.

In the North-East several initiatives have been taken to tackle the economic backwardness of the region. The North-East Council has emerged as an effective institution for implementing developmental activities. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution was amended for giving more powers to the Autonomous District Councils of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in Assam.

The economic scenario has been continuously improving. The Gross Domestic Product has shown a substantially faster rate of growth in the years subsequent to 1991-92. In 1994-95, this had increased to 6.3 per cent. Gross Domestic Savings at current prices improved in 1994-95 and was 24.4 per cent of GDP. Industrial production increased by 12 per cent in the first six months of the current year over the corresponding period last year, showing a strong revival.

Along with this, exports have gone up further by 24.17 per cent in the first eight months of the current financial year. Imports have also grown as a consequence of the overall growth of the economy, and the industrial sector in particular. Foreign exchange reserves are at a comfortable level of about \$16 billion.

The annual rate of inflation which had almost reached 17 per cent in August 1991 has been controlled and in the current year, the inflation rate has been brought down to around five per cent, which is the lowest in the last seven years. As a result of the strong support to the agricultural sector, foodgrain production and stocks

have reached very comfortable levels. The availability of various items of mass consumption has been maintained. The Public Distribution System has been strengthened and by introducing the Revamped Public Distribution System, additional concessions have been given for those living in the poorest areas of the country.

The small-scale industries sector accounts for about 40 per cent of the output in manufacturing and 34 per cent of the country's total exports. It has recorded a growth of 10 per cent during 1994-95 and accounted for employment of 146 lakh persons by the end of 1994-95. Export of goods by this sector is estimated to have increased from Rs. 13,883 crore in 1991-92 to Rs. 26,400 crore in 1994-95.

In the khadi and village industries sector, sales have reached a level of over Rs. 4,069 crore in 1994-95. This sector accounted for employment to 53.46 lakh persons in 1994-95. A Rs. 1000 crore consortium credit has been given to KVIC this year for the first time. Out of this, KVIC had sanctioned projects costing about Rs. 235 crore by the end of January 1996 to generate additional employment for about one lakh persons.

Our agricultural strategy has been to increase production through the best use of soil and water in an integrated fashion. During the Eighth Plan, Rs. 1,100 crore have been allocated for the restructured National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas. The coverage of Drought-Prone Areas Programme has also been increased to 946 blocks of 149 districts in 13 States. Coverage of the Desert Development Programme has been further extended to 227 blocks of 36 districts in Seven States. These programmes are being implemented with the active participation of the watershed community.

Foodgrain production in 1994-95 achieved a new record of 192 million tonnes. The production of sugar also reached a record level of nearly 145.85 lakh tonnes in 1994-95. The Government has built up a buffer stock of five lakh tonnes of sugar this year, as a precaution against possible fluctuations in availability and prices.

Disbursement of agricultural credit through institutional agencies is expected to reach a level of Rs. 26,450 crore in 1995-96 as against Rs. 21,113 crore in 1994-95. The consumption of chemical fertilizers during 1994-95 was 135.64 lakh tonnes. It is expected to further increase to 156.64 lakh tonnes in 1995-96.

The Government has been acutely sensitive to the needs of the poor. The programmes of direct alleviation of poverty have been expanded, as reflected in substantial increases in allocation for rural development, employment generation, housing, rural water supply, etc.

Under the Indira Awas Yojana, about 20 lakh houses were constructed between 1985-86 and 1994-95. However, in 1995-96 this programme has been further stepped up by undertaking a massive programme of construction of 10 lakh houses with a budget provision of Rs. 1000 crore and is progressing in full swing. Besides, steps have been taken to augment housing facilities for other sections as also government servants.

The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana which aims at providing self-employment opportunities to educated unemployed youth, had benefited 1,96,154 persons during 1994-95. For 1995-96, loans under the scheme are planned to reach 2.6 lakh persons.

As the honourable members know, the Government has launched the National Social Assistance Programme to provide for Old Age Pensions, Maternity Benefit and lumpsum payment on the death of the primary bread-earner in poor families. Complementing this package is a pioneering scheme of Group Life Insurance which includes subsidized premiums for the poor.

An Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme was launched in November 1995 to tackle the problem of urban poor in an integrated manner in all 345 class-II towns with a population ranging between 50,000 to one lakh. A provision of Rs. 100 crore has been made in the current financial year for the Programme.

The Government has strengthened the role and powers of the panchayats and nagarpalikas in all centrally-sponsored schemes operating at the district level and below. This initiative has also ensured the emergence of more than one million women as leaders and decision-makers at the grassroot level. Similarly, the States are being asked to empower these bodies with adequate financial and administrative responsibilities.

Substantial enhancement has been made in the allocations for schemes of special central assistance for special component plan, post-matric scholarships, National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation and aid to voluntary organizations. The Government has also revised the rates of main-

tenance and other allowances under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students.

A National Commission for *safai karamcharis* has been set up to monitor the implementation of the National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of *safai karamcharis* still engaged in night soil removal. Since the inception of the Scheme, about 94,000 such persons have been trained for other vocations and 2.5 lakhs have been rehabilitated.

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation has so far disbursed Rs. 131.64 crore for self-employment ventures. To enable the OBC candidates to compete on equal terms with general candidates in various recruitment tests and examinations, the Government has provided financial assistance to 122 coaching centres so far.

The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation has established linkages with State channelising agencies. Loans are being disbursed for self-employment. The Wakf Act, 1995, for effective and democratic administration of Wakf Boards has been brought into force with effect from 1 January 1996. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 has been enacted to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. It has also been decided to set up a National Finance and Development Corporation for the Disabled with an authorised share capital of Rs. 400 crore. A Bill to set up a National Trust to provide total care to persons with mental retardation and cerebral palsy has been introduced in the Lok Sabha.

The ongoing immunisation of children against six vaccine-preventable diseases has already yielded encouraging results. In keeping with the global goal of eradication of polio by 2000 AD, a supplemental dose of oral polio vaccine was administered to more than 7.5 crore children in the age group 0-3 years throughout the country on 9 December 1995 and the exercise was repeated on 20 January 1996. The Pulse Polio Immunisation will be continued in future years also.

The allocation for the education sector has been steadily increased as part of the Government's commitment to achieve the target of allocation of six per cent of GDP by the year 2000 AD. To realise the goal of universal elementary education, 110 districts would be brought within the ambit of the District Primary

Education Programme by the end of the Eighth Plan. A National Elementary Education Mission has been launched to cover all children up to the age of 14 years by the turn of the century. As part of the National Literacy Mission, Total Literacy Campaigns have been further extended to 368 districts and the Post Literacy Campaigns to 159 districts in the country. A major national programme of Nutritional Support to children in primary schools covering about 11 crore children from classes I to V over a three-year period was launched on 15 August 1995.

There has been a remarkable improvement in the industrial relations scenario in the country over the last five years. There is a significant decrease in the number of strikes and lock-outs and the number of mandays lost. The Government is committed to successfully implementing the Employees' Pension Scheme introduced in November 1995, which provides for the first time lifelong social security to about 19 million industrial workers and their families.

To bring our arbitration law in tune with the international thinking on the subject, an ordinance called The Arbitration and Conciliation Ordinance, 1996 has been promulgated. With this and the other steps taken to establish alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, it is hoped that India will soon emerge as a pioneer in this field in the South-Asian Region.

The achievements of our scientists in the past year have been noteworthy and give us confidence for the future.

Successful launches of INSAT-2C and IRS-1C satellites last December once again demonstrated our capability to design, build and operate state-of-the-art space systems, which will be vital for the development of our telecommunication, television, meteorological and resources survey programmes. We plan to launch INSAT-2D during 1996-97, and INSAT-2E and IRS-1D during 1997-98. We have also made good progress in developing the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, GSLV, for launching our INSAT class of satellites.

During the year, the country's tenth nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar commenced operation and was stabilised satisfactorily. The research reactors at Trombay have supplied more than 60,000

kits for diagnosis and treatment to more than 300 medical institutions all over the country.

As a result of the concentrated efforts of our scientists engaged in defence research, the Light Combat Aircraft was unveiled in November 1995 and test flights would commence by the end of this year. The development of the main battle tank Arjun has been completed with a view to its induction. The DRDO has developed a high-performance supercomputer using multiprocessor technology, which has met a long-felt need and which enhances our self-reliance in this field.

In the foreign affairs sphere, our relations with our neighbours were further strengthened. Our traditionally close ties with Bhutan were reinforced during the year. The visit to India of the former Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Manmohan Adhikari, in April 1995 and of the present Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba earlier this month, contributed to developing closer mutual understanding. The inauguration by the Prime Minister of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in the Maldives in April 1995 is testimony to our commitment to amity and cooperation with that country. Our relations with Sri Lanka were marked by cordiality and trust. Our trade with Bangladesh increased as did contacts between the peoples of the two countries. The momentum in our relations with China was maintained with a continuing dialogue at the highest levels. Our efforts resulted in promoting good relations with all our neighbours in South Asia, with the sole exception of Pakistan. We urge the Government of Pakistan to eschew its path of confrontation with India and respond constructively to our repeated offer of a bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Shimla Agreement.

A landmark in SAARC's progress was achieved last year with the operationalisations of the South Asia Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) from December 7, 1995. The signing of a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding on transit by India, Iran and Turkmenistan, which seeks to establish a viable surface route between India and Central Asia for commercial and other links, was an important event in the development of our links with Central Asia. ASEAN has agreed to full dialogue partnership status

for India. This reflects the growing, mutually beneficial relationship between India and ASEAN.

Our relations with the Russian Federation continued to be close. Further areas for cooperation in economic, cultural and other fields were identified. The India-United States relationship registered steady growth, in particular in the economic and commercial areas. Political and economic cooperation with countries in the African continent was promoted through high-level visits to and from Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

India took the lead in articulating the political, economic, social and other concerns of the developing countries in international forums like the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark in March, 1995; the UN General Assembly's 50th anniversary Special Commemorative Meeting in October, 1995; and the 11th Non-aligned Summit in Colombia in the same month. Consistent with its commitment to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament within a specified time-frame, India is participating actively in the negotiations for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. At the same time, we view the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as an obstacle to universal nuclear disarmament as it seeks to legitimise the nuclear arsenals of nuclear-weapon states.

As this session will be a brief one, only essential legislation will be taken up during this session. Some ordinances promulgated since the last Session will be placed before Parliament. A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1996-97 will be laid before you for the purpose of passing Vote on Account authorising expenditure for a part of that year. Vote on Account in respect of the States under the President's Rule would also need to be passed.

The policies of the Government have put the country on the path of growth enabling the people to realise their potential. The strength of the country lies in the strength of its economy and the unity of its people. During the last four-and-a-half-years, your dedication, wisdom and vision have left an imprint that will guide the nation into a brighter tomorrow.

Work to Realize Vision of Founding Fathers

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be present here, in this august Central Hall, hallowed by the memory of our leaders and freedom fighters.

Today, we pay homage to Maulana Azad, who was a towering figure of this century. He guided and shaped the destiny of our nation. He was a fighter for freedom. His *takhallus*—nom de plume—was ‘Azad’ which refers to Freedom. He devoted his entire life for the cause of a united, free, strong, secular India. A devout Muslim, an Alim steeped in Islamic tradition, he was a scholar renowned for his erudition and deep learning. His Urdu commentary on the Holy Quran, the *Tarjuman-Al-Quran* is one of the most significant works on Islamic thought.

Maulana Azad combined in himself the qualities of a visionary and the spirit of a man of action. He was a rivetting orator who held his audience spell-bound with his wisdom, the beauty of his language and his tremendous intellectual capabilities. At a very young age, he achieved great fame as editor of *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, journals which played an influential role in the awakening of political consciousness in India. He was a greatly respected member of the leadership that guided our struggle for freedom.

The world of letters, of books, art, music and poetry was his passion. The academic and cultural institutions, including the Akademis for music, art and drama, and the India Council for Cultural Relations which he helped establish and nurture stand eloquent testimony to his efforts as Minister of Education.

A symbol of our composite culture, our *tehzeeb*, Maulana Sahab represented a harmonious blend of the past and the present. In a moving obituary reference to the Maulana, in the Lok Sabha on 24 February 1958, Panditji, a close and dear friend, colleague, and fellow compatriot of the Maulana in the prisons of colonial India, said :

“We have had great men and we shall have great men; but I do submit that that peculiar and special type of greatness

Unveiling the statue of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the portrait of Madhu Limaye in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 15 March 1996

that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else."

I believe the defining contribution of Maulana Azad to our society, was his assiduous and untiring work for the sake of communal amity. As one of my illustrious predecessors, Dr. Zakir Husain, said in a speech at a public meeting in Delhi organized in memory of Maulana Azad on 23 February 1958 :

"The greatest service which the Maulana did was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One separates and differentiates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other, the true spirit of religion brings people together, it creates understanding. It lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. It implies belief in unity, in the essential unity of things".

I am convinced, that it is this aspect of his life and work which holds the most enduring message for Indians, indeed, for all people of the sub-continent. Maulana Saheb's philosophy of universal humainsm and the unity of religion was dervied from his deep study and meditations on the Holy Quran. Referring to the holistic philosophy in the Holy Quran, he said :

"Here is a person singing the praise of his Lord. But the Lord he praises is not the Lord of any particular race or community or religious group but Lord of all the worlds, *Rabbul-alamin...*, the source of sustenance and mercy uniformly for all mankind..."

From this insight followed his deep and abiding faith in the unity of religion and commitment to harmony and amity amongst the followers of all religions. The goal of Hindu-Muslim unity was perhaps even more important than freedom for Maulana Saheb, as it was for Bapu. In one of his famous speeches, as the youngest ever President of the Special Session of the Congress in Delhi in 1923, he said :

"If an angel were to descent from the high heavens and proclaim from the height of the Qutab Minar, 'Discard Hindu-Muslim Unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours,' I will refuse the proffered Swaraj, but will not budge an inch

from my stand. The refusal of Swaraj will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world”.

Seventeen years later, delivering his Presidential address to the Ramgarh Congress Session in 1940, Maulana Saheb further expounded on this theme. He said :

“I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have Islam's glorious tradition of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy. ...I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood...”

This is one of the most stirring speeches on national unity and our tradition of pluralism, synthesis and oneness. In another memorable passage, Maulana Saheb states that India's diverse cultures, “like the Ganga and Jamuna, flowed for a while through separate courses, but nature's immutable law brought them together and joined them in a *sangam*.”

In a speech before Partition, Maulana Saheb exhorted groups of potential migrants to reconsider their decision to migrate to Pakistan. He emphatically said that they would be like uninvited guests — ‘बिन बुलाये मेहमान’ — and that they would meet with prejudice and discrimination there. On another occasion, in a speech at Jama Masjid, he said : “The two-nation theory was the death-knell of a life of faith and belief... you will see that those on whom you rely for support will have forsaken you and left you helpless at the mercy of fate.” These were prophetic words, indeed.

The Maulana's message of universal humanism, amity and harmony in society is of abiding relevance. In some ways, after the first flush of joy at freedom, when our people were engaged in the tasks of nation-building and reconstruction, it was the preservation of our secular ethos, which was a crucial objective. This remains so even today. We should draw inspiration from Maulana Saheb's conviction and guiding principle of life that we are all Indians first and foremost; that we can be devout Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, that we can follow any faith we wish, and that the different faiths of India give strength to our national values, patriotism and yearning to build a better world for all. The message of Maulana Azad's life is of co-existence, assimilation and synthe-

sis of cultures and traditions. It is one of vibrant pluralism and deep oneness of our society.

I had briefly referred to this theme in my address to the nation on the eve of Republic Day this year, when I had drawn attention to the power of democratic pluralism in our society. It is vital for all of us to realize and appreciate the fact that it is our glorious diversity and pluralism and our system of parliamentary democracy which ensures our unity and protects our integrity, as a nation and as a civilization.

Though the doors of freedom have opened for us all, we cannot afford to be complacent. The gains of freedom, in all its different dimensions — political, social, economic, cultural and religious — must be secured and enlarged for each and every member of society.

We also honour today, a dear friend and colleague, a fervent nationalist and democrat Shri Madhu Limaye, who was snatched away from our midst only last year.

Of the diverse aspects of his personality, his inspiring role as a parliamentarian stands out most sharply in my memory. His outspoken views and clear perception of political, legal and constitutional matters were based on painstaking research and deep study. His objective and learned expositions in Parliament were heard by one and all with respect, even though not every one agreed with his point of view. The corpus of his speeches and books on important national issues constitute an important legacy for all of us, specially those in public life.

Madhuji practised what he preached. An inveterate socialist, influenced deeply by Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narain, Ram Manohar Lohia and Acharya Narendra Dev, he was spartan and austere in his private life. He believed in simple living and high thinking.

In honouring him today, we pay our respects to a freedom fighter who worked untiringly for the cause of liberating our national from the colonial yoke. He was a young student of eighteen years, when he first suffered imprisonment during the freedom struggle. After Independence, his efforts for the liberation of Goa sent him into Portuguese captivity. Personal hardship, never deterred Madhuji from his path of duty; indeed, adversity only strengthened his resolve for the righteous cause of democracy, equality and human dignity.

Madhu Limaye was a man of simplicity, integrity and high moral rectitude, a brilliant intellectual and scholar, and an emi-

nent parliamentarian. It is, indeed, fitting that his portrait has been placed in Parliament House alongside those of the great leaders of our nation.

I am glad that today, our Parliament has taken significant steps to facilitate worldwide electronic access to the wealth of information contained in our debates of the Constituent Assembly and of Parliament. I am informed that the Constitution too, is now readily available through the Internet. Keeping pace with the latest developments in information technology, an area in which our professionals have shown excellence, is essential, and I am happy that Parliament is showing the way.

As we enter the next millennia, let us all pledge to work for peace, prosperity and harmony in our society. Let us realize the vision of our freedom fighters and founding fathers of a nation resplendent in its vibrant diversity and confident and secure in its oneness and unity.

India at the Crossroads of History

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to address both Houses of Parliament at this first session after the eleventh general election to the Lok Sabha. I extend my warm felicitations to the Members of the new Lok Sabha.

The general election, just concluded, has demonstrated the democratic credentials of the country. The nation and the world have witnessed the majesty of the democratic process in India. The recent general election was organized with efficiency and despatch. Our people participated in large numbers and exercised their sovereign right in electing their representatives. Once again, India has demonstrated the strong, vibrant and enduring nature of her democratic ethos. The Government will fully honour the mandate implicit in the result of the election. The present session of Parliament should enable the House of the People to determine whether it has confidence in the Council of Ministers.

The country stands at the crossroads of history. As the century comes to a close and the millennium turns, our destiny as a strong and a powerful nation beckons us. The Government is conscious of our common responsibility to fulfil these historic tasks. Our endeavour should be to strive for a wholesome consensus on all vital national issues.

Among our primary tasks is that of ensuring to the State its due honour, prestige and strength. The basic institutions devised by the founding fathers with a view to providing good governance have to be strengthened. This may necessitate appropriate reforms in our polity and governance.

Providing clean and efficient administration is the need of the hour and the Government must commit itself to this goal. Probity and accountability have to be the key norms of public administration. Due propriety, promptitude and effectiveness should characterize every measure : administrative, legislative and political.

The deficiencies in our electoral processes are to be attended to. The matter has been pending for long and we can ill afford any further delay. A large number of suggestions have been made from time to time. On the basis of the wealth of material available and otherwise, necessary reforms will be taken up urgently. The prime objectives would be that the use of money power in the electoral process is eliminated, accountability of political parties is ensured and unfair practices are removed.

An in-depth review of our decision-making processes is another field which requires immediate attention. The primary task is to reduce as much as possible the scope of arbitrary decision making by ensuring that our processes are made simpler and more transparent. For a meaningful implementation of such a programme, we will have to provide for expeditious means for speedy disposal of public grievances.

The Government is committed to upholding the prestige and independence of the judiciary. A comprehensive examination of the work methods and environment, emoluments and conditions of service of the subordinate judiciary is being undertaken by the First National Judicial Pay Commission. The Government will facilitate its work with a view to ensuring speedy submission of its report.

Every effort will be made to reduce the arrears in the Courts

through the spread of modern management techniques and expeditious filling of the vacancies of judges.

The Government is conscious of the need to improve the welfare of Central Government employees. The Fifth Pay Commission is currently looking into their emoluments, structure and service conditions. Since the final report of the Commission is likely to take some time, the Government have requested them for their interim recommendations as early as possible, on the basis of which appropriate relief would be given.

The Government has a deep and abiding commitment to the freedom of the press and media. The electronic media are acquiring increased importance in our daily lives as a result of their pervasive presence and the Government is determined to free All India Radio and Doordarshan from governmental control by finally implementing the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990. In 1995, the Supreme Court had even directed the Government to set up an independent authority to regulate the airwaves. The Government would take all necessary steps to establish a truly autonomous Prasar Bharati Corporation which would strengthen national identity, integration, credibility in dissemination of information and provision of quality education and entertainment.

The vastness of our country, its diversity and the underlying unity are our basic strengths. India is one people, one nation with her unique culture. The Government will do all that it may to ensure that harmonious relations are maintained between different communities and groups. The Government is committed to providing security and protecting the life and property of all people, particularly the weaker sections and minorities. Violence manifesting itself in separatist, extremist, criminal and anti-social activities has no place in any civilized society and would be effectively dealt with by the Government. In doing so the Government cannot forget that political, social and economic measures are equally necessary in resolving these problems.

The North Eastern region of our country continues to suffer from violence, insurgency and ethnic strife. There is need to check the inflow of foreign arms and terrorists from across the border by strengthening the security apparatus and the intelligence network. Illegal immigration which has an unsettling effect will be curbed through comprehensive measures. Effective administration for acceleration of economic development and providing for a prompt grievance redressal system, are also urgent requirements.

Jammu and Kashmir is an inalienable part of India. No attempt to interfere with our internal affairs there will be tolerated. We are keen to restore the democratic functioning of the State for which all efforts are being made to ensure free and fair polls in the State. Side by side, efforts for socio-economic development of the different regions will be intensified.

The Government is anxious to improve Centre-State relations. The report of the Sarkaria Commission and other extensive studies provide ample material on the various facets of this problem. The Government will ensure that there is increased consultation with the State governments and that there is no misuse of Article 356. The role and status of the Inter-State Council envisaged under Article 263 of the Constitution will be reviewed in depth and action taken to make it an effective mechanism to resolve disputes between States and for better coordination of policies and action in matters of common interest to States.

In order to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Uttaranchal and Varnanchal, the Government will take such steps as are necessary to give them full statehood. The various problems connected with the grant of full statehood to Delhi will also receive our serious consideration.

Our vision of India's economy is one which enables India to achieve its destiny in the forefront of the nations of the world. We have an abiding faith in the creative genius of every Indian. Our task is to release their energies by shedding out-dated structures of controls and regulations and re-equipping the Government for its new role of providing a supportive framework for free market operations for growth, while strengthening programmes for poverty eradication and building of social infrastructure.

The economic reforms of the past five years did achieve some measure of success. The Government will invigorate the growth impulses in the economy and control inflation by accelerating the process of economic reforms, providing much greater support and impetus to infrastructure development, and maintaining a sound framework of fiscal and monetary policies.

Today, high interest rates and scarce credit are inhibiting the growth of industry, trade and agriculture. The root-cause of the problem is the continued recourse to high levels of borrowings by the Government, to meet its ever-expanding expenditures. The Government will prune non-development expenditure and acceler-

ate tax reform to reduce the fiscal deficit and thus release resources for more productive activities. The Government will identify areas from which it needs to withdraw. In taxation, we will ensure that not only levels and rates of taxation are such that growth is not constrained, but that the burden-sharing is equitably distributed among all affluent sections of the society. The Government will also devise a suitably structured value-added tax.

To deal with the massive overhang of past public debt and to ensure a higher return to assets in public enterprises, the Government will constitute a Disinvestment Commission to accelerate the process of disinvestment in a systematic and transparent manner. Part of the proceeds will be earmarked for retiring public debt and the balance to finance capital expenditure. While disinvesting, care will be taken so that the workers' interests are not harmed. The National Renewal Fund will be realigned towards retraining and redevelopment of workers that may be necessary in a fast-growing economy.

Public savings will increase and private savings will be stimulated to finance the much higher levels of national investment necessary to accelerate economic growth and eradicate poverty. Foreign savings and investment will be welcomed to supplement the national savings effort. A country of India's size and potential can easily double the flow of direct foreign investment, especially in the critical infrastructure areas of power, roads, ports and telecommunications.

The Government will draw up an integrated time-bound programme to increase capacities and release bottlenecks posed by insufficient infrastructure in energy, especially power, coal and petroleum, roads, ports, railways, irrigation and telecommunications. The policy framework for inducting private, including foreign investment will be revamped and made transparent.

The Government is committed to bringing about long-pending reform of the corporate laws which will ensure their functioning as instruments of economic growth, rather than merely regulatory mechanisms. The laws must promote entrepreneurship and freedom of industry from all avoidable inhibitions and disincentives. Necessary legislative action in this direction will be speedily undertaken.

The Government fully recognizes the importance of the small-scale sector for production and employment in the economy. The

difficulties faced by this sector will be carefully reviewed and the obstacles to rapid progress will be eliminated.

The construction industry is one of our largest sectors, providing jobs to millions. A major constraint to growth of this sector has been the Urban Land Ceiling Act. The Government will review the rationale of this Act.

All this will be necessary to restore the competitive edge of our producers, large and small, so that they can effectively win the challenges of the international market-place. Our export growth has to be stepped up to meet the import needs of a more dynamic economy. For the short and medium-term viability of our balance of payments, the Government will ensure policies for rapid and sustained export growth and for attracting adequate inflows of non-debt creating capital. The Government will review and simplify the regime of foreign exchange controls in line with the needs of a modernizing economy.

To strengthen our financial and capital markets, the Government will provide for greater accountability and competition for public financial institutions, including banks. To promote healthy development and avoid scams and irregularities, the Government will undertake a programme to modernize the infrastructure of capital markets, including swift passage of enabling legislation for depositories.

Three-quarters of our citizens live in rural India, and agriculture is the life-blood of rural society. Rapid broad-based development of agriculture is vital for ameliorating rural poverty, ensuring self-sufficiency in food, strengthening the domestic market for industry and services and building mutually beneficial links between agriculture and industry. The Government will allocate more funds for rural infrastructure, ensure remunerative prices to farmers, free agro-based industries such as sugar from licensing controls and strengthen the Public Distribution System in rural areas. Optimal utilisation of scarce water resources is critical for agricultural development. The Government will give special priority to completing ongoing irrigation projects.

Water is our most precious resource and its conservation and effective utilisation is of paramount importance. The Government attaches high priority for watershed-based development of drought-prone areas and wasteland reclamation through adequate technical support and people's involvement.

In order to ensure cow-protection, and to impose a total ban on the slaughter of cows and cow progeny, the Government will take up suitable measures.

The Government will pursue policies aimed at the real empowerment of women, so as to ensure that their dignity and rights are not violated and their full potential is realized. The Government will take necessary legislative and other steps to provide for reservation of 33 per cent of the seats for women in all elected bodies, including State Assemblies and Parliament.

The disabled and all those who are placed in a position of undeserved want for reasons beyond their control, are the primary responsibility of the State. Simultaneously trade and industry will be sensitized as to their social obligation in this respect. Our senior citizens also deserve special care. The Government will consider their problems and take measures which would make their lives easier in their old age.

The Government is painfully aware of the extensive levels of poverty in the country. The needs of the poorest sections in the country require the most urgent, sympathetic attention. We shall strengthen the programmes which contribute substantially to their social and economic uplift. These would provide them with gainful employment and income-generating assets. In doing so our endeavour would be to ensure that the present disparities in socio-economic conditions are eliminated. Special attention would therefore be given to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, the Backward Classes, the other deprived sections of the society and to the problems of bonded and child labour. Programmes for poverty alleviation and other welfare measures for the weaker sections of our society need to be accurately focussed on those who really need support from the Government. The Government will soon begin the process of identifying the five crore poorest of the poor families for immediate relief. The role of the State Government in implementing these programmes is crucial and it would be our effort to give necessary flexibility to them and enlist their active support in the task of promoting greater economic and social justice.

Growth cannot be measured in economic terms alone. The problems of poverty, disease and hunger require a multi-dimensional approach. In fact, no improvement in the quality of life, which is the real index of growth, is possible without social inputs like education, health and other welfare measures. The Government

would initiate a pioneering ten-year plan focussed upon providing nutrition for the children of the poor, their health care and facilities for education so that they are brought at the same level as other children. Adequate resources for this plan would be made available.

The Government attaches high priority to education as an instrument for the material, physical and spiritual development and enrichment of society and the individual. We witness today the old economic order based on comparative advantage of labour and resources giving way to a new order being built on the foundation of human resource, skills and technology. The changing economic scenario and rising social aspirations require significant modifications in our educational programmes. We have not yet been able to provide free elementary education to our children as enjoined by our Constitution. This requires urgent rectification. The Government will encourage vocational and technical education. The Government recognizes the need for special efforts for the spread of education amongst women. Programmes in vocational and technical education to enable them to be eligible for suitable employment opportunities would be given emphasis. Higher education would be revamped so as to facilitate India emerging as a major economic power in the international arena. In this sphere, the existing centres of excellence, require urgent attention to be strengthened. Such centres in new areas are also called for.

We believe in increasing State investment in health and nutrition programmes as this is essential for raising the quality of life of our people. Our goal will be health for all. Reduction of the infant mortality rate, immunisation of children against killer diseases, improvement of the primary health care systems will be the corner—stones of these programmes. In this we will make full use of Ayurveda, Unani, Homoeopathy and other Indian systems of medicine.

The Government will give due priority to population-related issues especially family planning in the national agenda. The long-term objective is to stabilize population by the first decade of the next century. The Government will devise a system of incentives and disincentives for encouraging adoption of family planning norms.

It is unfortunate that even safe drinking water is still scarce or unavailable to a large number of our habitations. There are 1.6 lakh habitations with no drinking water facilities and 1.4 lakh

habitations where such water is badly contaminated. The Government is committed to providing drinking water facilities to all our people in a time-bound manner. We shall consult the State Governments and extend necessary support to them in achieving this goal. In areas where drinking water is chemically contaminated, available technologies would be harnessed for making it safe and potable. The Government considers community participation in this programme necessary and would take action to encourage this.

The Government recognizes the important role that science and technology has in transforming society. Steps would be taken to harness the latest advances in the service of the people. Special attention will be paid to the needs of the rural areas. Measures will be taken to see that national interests and intellectual property rights are adequately protected. The Government will continue to support the country's space programme which has demonstrated its high potential and utility for the overall development of the country.

Our foreign policy is governed by our national interests and reflects India's position as a major player in the world arena, responding to the possibilities and challenges of the post-Cold War situation and rejecting all forms of hegemonism or dominance. In this process, our political, economic security and other concerns will be pursued in a clear and unambiguous manner.

The Government's foremost priority in the area of foreign policy will be the improvement of relations with all our neighbours in South Asia including Pakistan, bilaterally, and in the SAARC forum. We will foster mutually beneficial partnership with all countries. We will strengthen our broad-based ties with Russia. We look forward to the further strengthening and diversification of our relations with the USA. We will utilize the opportunities offered in India-China relations to enhance friendship and cooperation. In keeping with our commitment to Asian solidarity, we look forward to reinforcing our friendly relations with the ASEAN member states.

India's role in the multilateral field has always been constructive. Our policy on issues such as a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty will be governed by our traditional commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world. While our commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is well-known, where necessary in the light of our national interests, our nuclear policy will be re-evaluated.

There will be no compromise on our country's vital security concerns. The programme of indigenous development of our defence capability in terms of research and acquisitions will continue and be reinforced in the light of our security needs. We will stress a coordinated approach to national security by revitalising the structure and enhancing the status of the National Security Council.

We repose full confidence in the capability of the Indian armed forces to defend the nation and will do whatever is necessary to maintain and enhance this capability. I am sure the honourable Members join me in commending the armed forces for their professionalism and dedication. Recognizing their invaluable contribution, the Government is committed to taking all possible steps to promote their welfare. We cannot forget the large community of our ex-servicemen. They have rendered valuable service to the nation and deserve our special consideration. The Government will establish a Sainik Kalyan Foundation with a suitable endowment to take care of rehabilitation and welfare.

The country is faced with a number of crucial challenges as we stand on the threshold of the next century. The eleventh Lok Sabha will have the honour of contributing to the task of piloting the country to the next century.

With Freedom Comes Responsibility

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be present with you on the occasion of Revolution Day, when we commemorate fifty years of the beginning of the last phase of the struggle for freedom in Goa. The presence of freedom fighters at today's function makes this a very special occasion for me personally and I am sure for all who are present here.

Today is a day of remembrance and of contemplation. It provides an opportunity to pause and reflect upon the sterling

Presenting the 1994 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, to Archbishop Huddleston, New Delhi, 27 January 1995



Addressing a Sammelan of Panchayat Adhyakshas, New Delhi, 10 October 1995

Presenting the Small Scale Entrepreneur's Awards, 11 October 1995



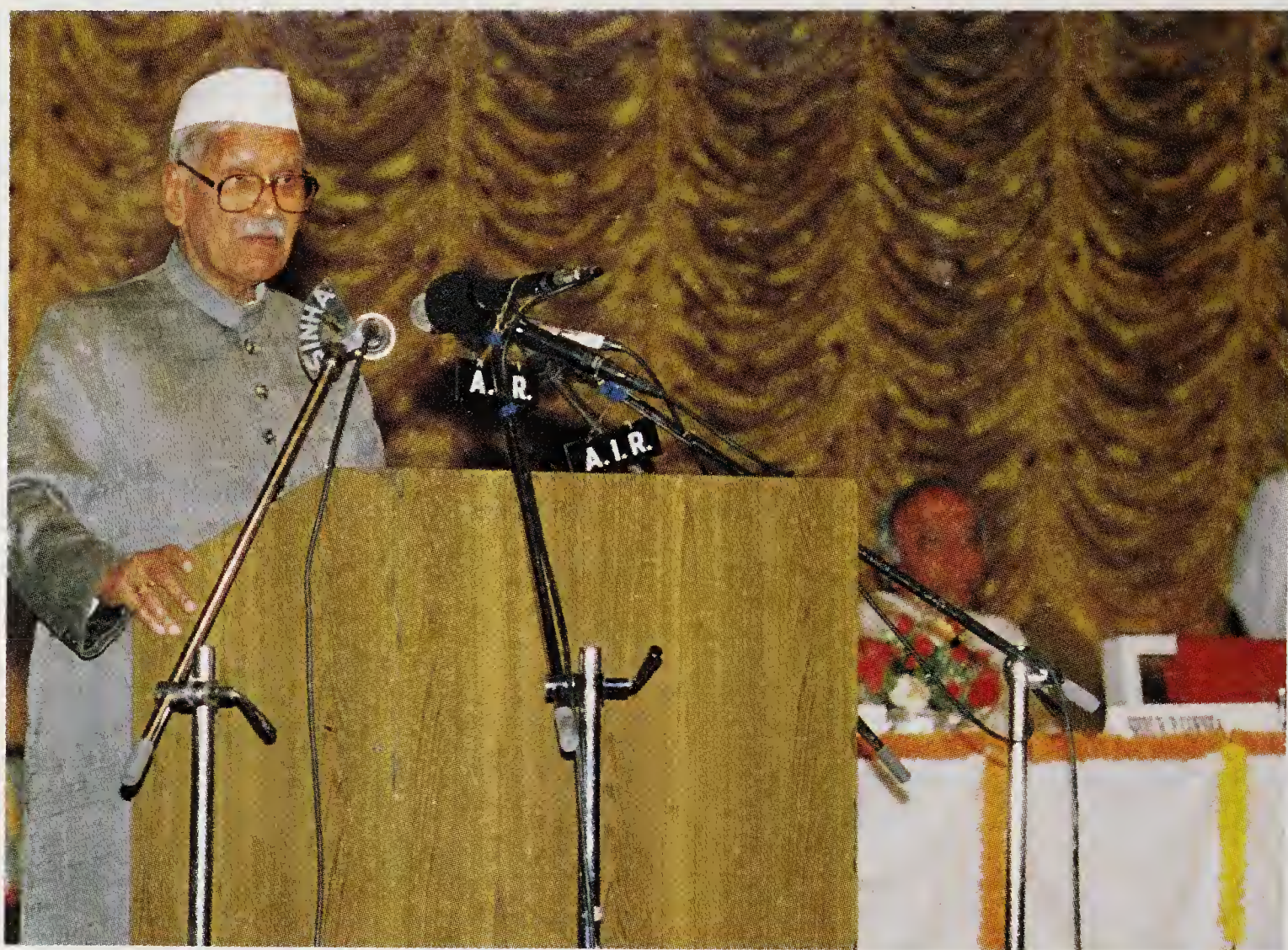
*Inauguration of the India International Trade Fair, 1995 New Delhi,
14 November 1995*

Felicitating Freedom Fighters, 10 December 1995



At the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Achuta Menon Centre and Library, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996

Inauguration of the Agri-Horti Expo 1996, on the occasion of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India completing 175 Years, New Delhi, 1 March 1996



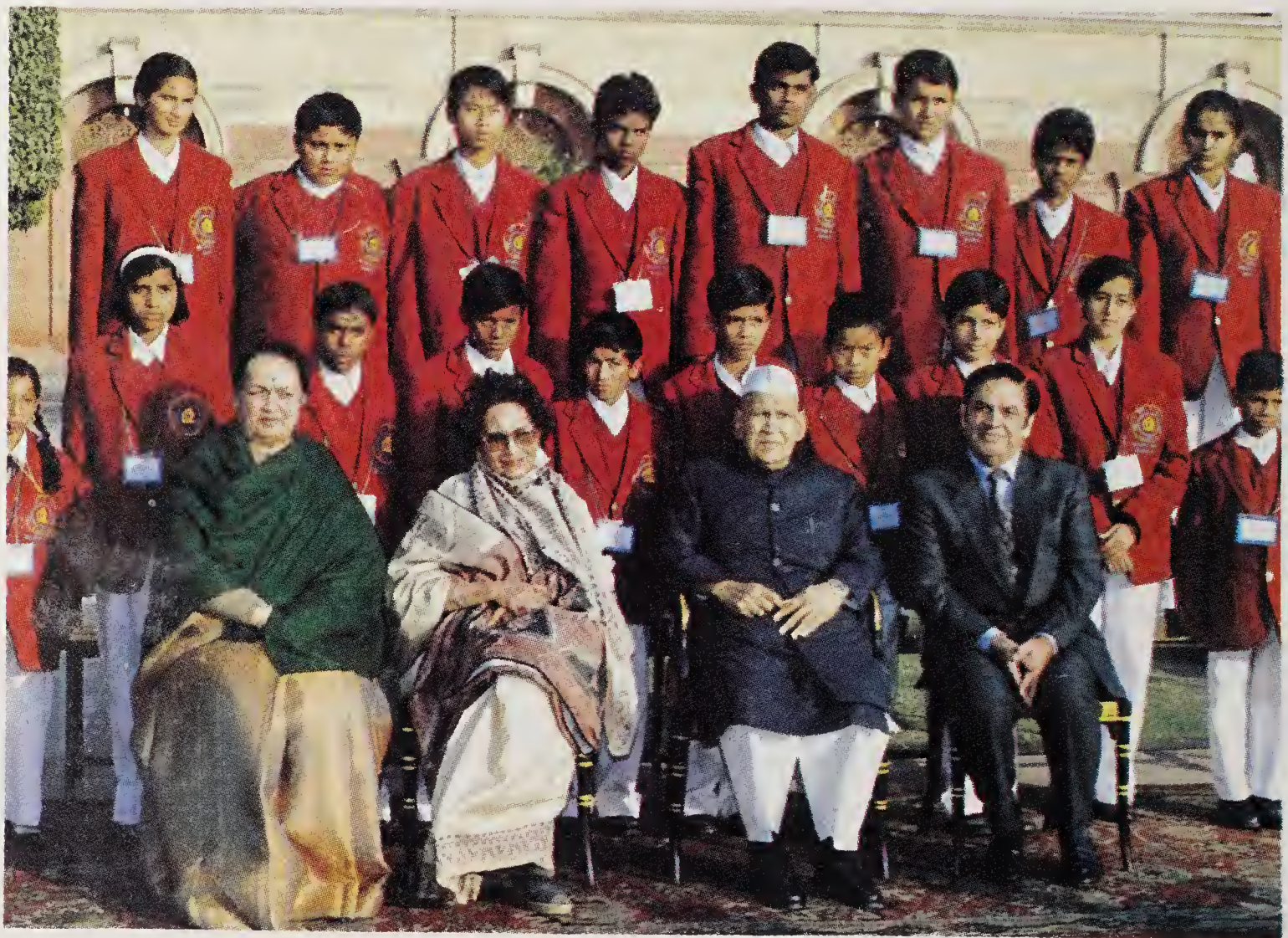
On the Goa Revolution Day, Panaji, 18 June 1996

At the Goa State Museum, 18 June 1996



*At the inauguration of the Vidhan Sabha building in Bhopal,
3 August 1996*

At the inauguration of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the constitution of the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi, 9 December 1996



Brave Children call on the President, 22 January 1997

Inauguration of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics" New Delhi, 14 February 1997



At the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Dr. Zakir Hussain, New Delhi, 7 May 1997

At the Governors' Conference, 2 June 1997



At the farewell hosted by Members of Parliament, Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 22 July 1997

contributions made by the stalwarts of our freedom struggle. It is a moment when the people of Goa, indeed of the entire nation, pay tribute to those valiant women and men who made glorious sacrifices for the liberation of our people from colonial bondage.

The struggle for freedom involved long years of suffering and toil. It was nourished and nurtured by the blood, sweat and tears of our loved ones, our leaders and common people alike. Patriotic citizens from every nook and corner of India, from cities and urban settlements, from villages and remote rural hamlets, were united as one in their goal of Purna Swaraj. It was this intense yearning for liberty and human dignity and the desire to be in control of our own destiny, which sustained and added momentum to our struggle.

I belong to that generation of Indians who fought for and secured freedom. I recall vividly the excitement, the daring, the spirit of 'Do or Die' which imbued our every effort. We were all passionately devoted to the cause of Mother India. No adversity was too strong, no obstacle insurmountable in our goal of freedom.

In Goa, the fight against the colonial yoke began soon after the establishment of Portuguese administration, almost half a millennium ago. The uprising of the villagers from the Salcete province in the 16th century, the Revolt of the Pintos during the 18th century and the rebellions of the Ranes of Satari over two centuries, are only a few of the many significant efforts of the people against foreign domination. The stirring writings of Francisco Louis Gomez during the late 19th century and later of Louis de Menezes Braganza in the journal *Prakash* influenced and inspired several generations of Goans who fought for liberation. The political awakening on the sub-continent and the message of Mahatma Gandhi for liberation and human dignity found an echo in Goa and provided the impetus for the setting up of the Goa Congress Committee.

It is against this background that, fifty years ago, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, an ardent socialist, a fiery revolutionary and a true patriot, provided the spark which ignited the aspirations and desires of the people of Goa for freedom and harnessed their energies into a well-organized movement. Dr. Lohia defied the ban of the Portuguese rulers on civil liberties and public gatherings by

holding the first public meeting in Margao on 18 June 1946. He was arrested and suffered imprisonment.

In his inspiring address on the occasion, he said :

“Gomantak is a part of Hindustan and that Portugal rules over it as Britain over the rest of the country, is an accident and a bad dream and will pass. The United State of Hindustan will come.

Our people are creating it. We have come into the last stages of creation... Meanwhile, the people of Gomantak think freely, speak freely, write freely and act to build up an organized strength.”

Bapu expressed full support for the actions of Dr. Lohia. In an article in *Harijan* of 26 June 1946, he wrote :

“According to Dr. Lohia’s statement, for ... years... the people of Goa have been robbed of the right to hold meetings and form organizations. Naturally he defied this, thereby rendering a service to the cause of civil liberty and especially to the Goans.”

Bapu further urged the people of Goa to,

“shed fear of the Portuguese as the people of other parts of India have shed their fears of British Government and assert their fundamental right to civil liberty and all that it means.”

The electrifying impact of Dr. Lohia’s meeting has been captured by B.B. Borkar in his magnificent poem “*Swatantrayachi Singhagarjana*” :

“धन्य लोहिया, धन्य भूमि ही, धन्य तिचे पुत्र
धन्य तयांचा त्याग-देखते जनतेचे नेत्र
कौल मिळाला, फुटला नारळ, गुढी उभी झाली
आणि माउली, चढला कुंकुम पुन्हा तुझ्या भाळी
झडली भीती, चढली नीती, तुटला गे लोभ
सामर्थ्याचा अतां अंतरी उफाळला क्षोभ”

(Blessed is Lohia, blessed is this land,
Blessed her sons, blessed is their sacrifice,
Seen by the people.

The omens have been read,
 An auspicious beginning made.
 The flag of our purpose has been held aloft
 And beloved motherland, *kumkum* has again adorned
 your forehead,
 Fear has been shed.
 Our policy and purpose is supreme,
 Broken and gone is any sense of greed.
 There is an outburst of tremendous inner
 courage.)

The exhortation of Dr. Lohia to the people of Goa to stand up against colonial rule evoked an enthusiastic response. It marked the dramatic beginning of the end of Portuguese domination in Goa. It galvanized the people of Goa into the 'Jai Hind Movement'. A series of Satyagrahas were organized by the Goans. Several leaders of the movement including T.B. Cunha, Purushottam Kakodkar, Laxmikant Bhembre, Dr. Rama Hegde, Lakshman Rao Sardesai, Dr. Vinayak Mayekar, Dr. Narayan Bhembre, Jose Inacio Loyola, Dattatreya Deshpande, Dr. Pundalik Gaitonde, Telo Mascarenhas, Divakar Kakodkar, G.S. Tielo, Mukund Kamat Dhakankar, Nilkanth Karpurkar, Mohan Ranade, P.P. Shirodkar, Naraina Naik, Jaiwant Kunde and many other were arrested and deported to foreign lands. They were put to untold suffering in foreign jails, but their devotion to the cause of liberation remained undiminished.

The unflinching sentiment of the times was well expressed in the poem titled "*Goye Sodun Chal Salazar*" which some of those present here may recall. I would like to quote a few lines :

“गावा गावांतल्यान एक पुकार
 गोंय सोडून चल सालाझार।
 स्वतंत्रतायेची काळजात तळमळ
 आमी चलयली एकीन चळवळ।
 हातात बावटो, गळ्यांत ललकार
 गोंय सोडून चल सालाझार।
 खेडया पाडयांतल्यान जवान उठले
 नेटान गोये पेटून उठले।
 शेता-भाटांतल्यान घुमली ललकार
 गोंय सोडून चल सालाझार।”

(From village to village
 there is one call
 'Quit Goa and leave Salazar'
 With passion for liberation in our hearts
 We empowered this movement
 Flag in hand, a challenge about our necks
 'Quit Goa and leave Salazar'
 In village and hamlet,
 young men rose,
 The fire of freedom flamed forth.
 From field to field reverberated the call
 'Quit Goa and leave Salazar')

In their struggle, the people of Goa, had the unstinting support of their brethren outside Goa. During a Satyagraha organized in Patradevi on the Goa-Karnataka border, several patriotic citizens from India marched for the freedom of Goa. Fearless and unflinching in their purpose, Vasant Rao Oak and Sahodara Devi Rai, leaders of this group, were hit by bullets and injured. Karnal Singh from Punjab made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of Goa's liberation. Madhu Limaye, N.G. Gore and S.M. Joshi were also prominent in the struggle. The sacrifices of these leaders were not in vain. On 19 December 1961 the people of Goa breathed the fresh air of freedom following the success of 'Operation Vijay'. Goa was united with and became an intrinsic part of free India.

After the liberation of Goa, Pandit Nehru expressed the joy of the entire nation, thus. He said :

"Nothing has happened in India since Independence, fourteen-and-a-half years ago, which has excited and thrilled the people of India so much as this liberation of Goa. It has roused tremendous reaction in the whole of India and in Goa. In Goa this even has been hailed by the people..."

Our nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to the great leaders and ordinary people who participated in the liberation struggle. It is fitting that we honour these patriots today. However, our debt cannot be redeemed merely by recalling their glorious services to the motherland. It is essential that they are provided with all the attention and respect which their invaluable service to the nation richly deserves. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that the needs and requirements of those who won us our freedom are met with loving care.

Let us realize that with freedom comes the responsibility to build a new India. The task before the nation is to secure and enlarge the gains of freedom for each and every citizen, particularly the weaker sections, the oppressed, the suppressed and the down-trodden. It is our bounden duty to ensure the full flowering of freedom in its manifold dimensions — economic, social and political. We have taken great strides in making freedom more meaningful for all our people. Goa, in particular, has progressed significantly. Today, Goa is one of the more prosperous States in the country, with high rates of literacy, a well-developed industrial and mining sector and a flourishing tourism industry.

Yet, there is some distance to traverse in order to improve the quality of life of our people, to ensure freedom from want, from poverty, ignorance and disease, from prejudice and superstition, from narrowness and fear.

The struggle for political freedom was arduous. It involved immense suffering. Central to our struggle was the deep and intense commitment to the moral and ethical values of truth, non-violence and the spirit of brotherhood. It is this commitment which provided our people with the abundant energy to surmount all manner of obstacles. We must bring this force of moral and ethical commitment to bear in our task of national reconstruction and for building a better world. Let us draw inspiration from the shining example set by our freedom fighters. Let us all pledge ourselves to this task.

Create Nation-wide Social Awareness

ON THE EVE of our Independence Day, I have great pleasure in extending to you my warmest greetings and felicitations. This year, Independence Day marks the commencement of the fiftieth year after our regaining freedom. In this history of a nation as ancient as India, a span of this duration may not seem appreciable, but it is special to us who live through it, as a period of freedom,

independence and national self-respect. Every moment of it is to be cherished and devoted to the task of realizing the goals of freedom.

My comrades in the struggle would recall the intense yearning at that time for India's liberation from bondage. Innumerable sons and daughters of India gave up their lives, bravely and selflessly fighting for the freedom and dignity of our nation. Sacrificing themselves in this great cause, they joined the glorious ranks of the immortals in our history. The struggle was long, arduous, challenging and heroic. At times massive punitive action was inflicted on us with such ferocity and ruthlessness that to many the vision of freedom seemed a distant and unattainable dream. India was after all regarded as the brightest and most valuable jewel in the crown of the mightiest ever on earth. The rulers of that time scoffed at us and asked us whether we really believed India would ever be free. And yet freedom was secured. This was a historic triumph of the human spirit. Steady, dedicated effort by millions, inspired and guided by leaders of high moral and ethical stature, brought India out of the darkness of humiliation and servitude.

Let us be aware that bondage comes in many forms. The subjugation and enslavement of nations and peoples for sustained exploitation of their assets, human and physical, no longer requires force of arms, physical occupation of territory, draconian laws, prisons across seas or shackles of iron. Indeed these instruments and techniques have been long discarded as outmoded, inefficient and counter-productive. Therefore, apart from the usual and obvious methods, such as tilted terms of trade, and undermining self-reliance in economic growth, the focus now is on the mind of the nation and its people. The key and most sensitive elements determining national destiny are the values and ideals of the nation, our foremost concerns as a people, our felt needs and priorities, our aspirations, the national atmosphere, the policies developed and the way in which the mechanisms and institutions of our national life function. We must be determined and ensure that we move in the direction of national interest and that we are not propelled by the agenda of others.

It is in these respects that we have fully to be cognizant, vigilant and purposeful. It is in these respects that we can generate a tremendous, vitalizing force for advancement, growth, friendship, peace and the good of all. It is in these very respects that we must resolutely withstand and neutralize the formidable pressures manoeuvred against us.

It is a matter of great good fortune that we are uniquely endowed to do so. Our spiritual, intellectual and cultural heritage is of universalism. The core values and ideals of the great religions and philosophies that have flourished in India are of oneness, harmony, equality, justice, compassion, service, truth and non-violence. Concern for the well-being of all, mutual respect for each other's viewpoints, the spirit of cooperation and friendship and sharing, the yearning to relieve the suffering of all living things, the aspiration to build Peace — true Peace — not just absence of war — all these positive aspects go into the making of India's national identity, national psyche and the personal identity of all of us as citizens of this great country. These virtues sustain India, account for the continuity of our ancient civilization as well as our receptivity to all things wholesome and beneficial, our national characteristics of assimilation, diversity, synthesis, pluralism and harmony. These virtues of universalism gave our struggle for freedom its unique and classic quality : the struggle was waged and the suffering undergone not for the freedom of India alone but as a global movement for the emancipation of the subjugated, the oppressed and the down-trodden all over the world. This spirit of universalism was expressed in the very first moments of Independence when we declared that Peace is indivisible, so also is Freedom, so also is Prosperity - thus announcing to the world India's cognition that these great boons are not truly realized so long as any part of humanity continues to suffer. Every member of the Constituent Assembly of India had pledged to work for the well-being of all humankind. It is such a perspective which energized India's policy of non-alignment and India's quest for Peace, Development and Disarmament. It is precisely this approach, in tune with core national values and ideals, that vitalizes our system of democracy and accounts for its inner strength, growth and effectiveness.

The recently concluded general elections afforded further proof as to the efficacy, maturity and resilience of our democracy. With faith in democracy, the electorate in Jammu & Kashmir boldly withstood the machinations of sinister forces of violence. The smooth transition of power from one government to another and the working of the parliamentary form of governance has been a matter of admiration. Although no party had the majority in the Lok Sabha, coalitions were soon formed and tested on the floor of the House. Despite a wide range of parties in the Lok Sabha, the election of the Speaker was unanimous, and respecting a conven-

tion, the Deputy Speaker was also elected unanimously. With the elections for, and the constitution of, the Eleventh Lok Sabha, and the formation of the Council of Ministers, India has again demonstrated her expertise and mastery of the processes of the parliamentary form of democratic governance. The immense scale of general elections in the world's largest democracy, peaceful and fair polling and measured progress of constitutional processes for change and installation of governments, redound to the credit of our country.

A new chapter has opened in the history of federal governance. There are governments now with different political parties in various States and at the Centre. The federal apparatus has smoothly adjusted to these developments. It would be heartening to see, in inter-State matters, an approach of constructive consultation for mutual resolution of many problems—including, particularly, sensitive issues of sharing and utilizing scarce resources such as water and power. Many a problem that may appear intractable and daunting can be resolved by the democratic approach of discussion and mutual accommodation. Such instances enrich our democratic experience and set examples for emulation in other spheres.

It is essential now, at this juncture of our political development to devote ourselves also to concerted action vis-a-vis social inequities, unjust structures, ideas and practices that beset and weaken our nation. We have an exalted humanitarian heritage of thought reflected in our Constitution and in many laws. What is required urgently is the building of a nation-wide social awareness and consensus, a powerful movement for social reform, which can give real and practical effect to the rights and safeguards enshrined in the Constitution and the laws. There has to be wider perception that justice is not done merely by the application of laws, but by social change and transformation. What matters is the way the community responds against injustice, violence and deprivation. Community sensitivity to social reality has to be heightened. This is a task of profound importance. The role of the judiciary, social activists, the Press and the media will be crucial. Parliamentarians, legislators and the representatives of the people must of course be in the forefront in this task, but there is scope, and a crying need, for contributions by all citizens in such a movement for social change and reform. I would appeal to all patriotic citizens, particularly the youth, who have always been in the vanguard of progressive action, to take up this challenge.

I should add that without social reform and transformation, no tangible and meaningful progress can be made. We have to do away with the distortions, the disparities and inequities in our social structure that block the path to future growth in all spheres.

The great prospects and challenges ahead call for a resolute effort by all — the *kisan*, the *jawan* and *mazdoor* — and by every member of our polity : all must participate with a new sense of mission. The women of India, particularly, must attain their due position as equal partners in every sector of nation-building activity. The greatest democracy in the world must prove itself as a powerful social, economic and political partnership, striving for the universal values and ideals that our nation has always upheld before the world.

As we endeavour to build the future of our nation we also reiterate to our neighbourhood and to the rest of the world our message of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. We believe that concerted efforts to promote mutually beneficial regional cooperation as between nations of the SAARC as also in the Indian Ocean Region and with nations of the ASEAN, would open the path to higher levels of development, prosperity and happiness for all. We shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs.

Tomorrow, on our Independence Day, when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom, reiterate our national resolve and rededicate ourselves to the glory of our nation and our people and to the good of all humankind.

Give-and-Take Policy will Help Resolve Problems

THE FIRST OF November is a very special day for the Telugu people. It is on this day that the State of Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956. I extend my warm felicitations and good wishes on this occasion.

It is fitting that we honour today the memory of an illustrious son of Andhra, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, who became a symbol of the yearnings and aspirations of the people of Andhra Pradesh. The statue which I have had the privilege of unveiling, is a warm tribute by the people of Andhra Pradesh to their charismatic leader.

I have known Shri N.T. Rama Rao through the trials and tribulations of his political life and I feel that perhaps the most significant achievement of NTR or *Anna* as he was affectionately known, was to rekindle awareness and re-instill pride in the ancient cultural and spiritual heritage of the Telugu people. He was a towering figure in Andhra Pradesh and represented the rich and splendid diversity of this beautiful State. His imposing personality, deep and sonorous voice, his rivetting oratory and his knowledge made him easily one of the great leaders.

Having achieved a supreme and unassailable position in Telugu films, particularly in mythological films, NTR was admired, loved, respected and revered by the common people, many of whom believed that he was a living incarnation of the deities which he portrayed in his films. Many of you would recall that NTR's film on Lord Venkateshwara so moved the people that offerings of coconut and money were made in cinema halls where this film was screened.

NTR was not merely a legendary actor and one of the stalwarts of the film world. He was much more. He was a devout and deeply spiritual individual, steeped in our tradition of classical learning. He was a humanist who felt a strong empathy for the people, the poor and the underprivileged. He was a man with a deep social consciousness, a man of action and determination who did not sway away from his cause of serving the down-trodden. Once his mind was made up he did not waver in his determination to achieve the goal, however difficult it might be.

Indeed, his life was a saga of compassion and love for the ordinary citizens. He became a legend in his own lifetime. His work in mobilizing support for the victims of floods in Andhra Pradesh in the 1960's and the Vijayawada fire as well as during the 1962 conflict testified to this strong feeling for the people and sense of patriotism. A *karmayogi*, he was a strong proponent of our tradition which states that service to the people is service to God :

“मानव सेवये माधव सेवा”

NTR was fond of saying :

“समाजमे ना देवालयं प्रजले ना देवुडल्ल”

(The society is my temple and people are my God).

NTR's social commitments blossomed during his tenure as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Not only did he minister to the cultural and social needs of the people — he set up the famous row of statues of eminent personalities of Andhra Pradesh along the Tank Bund — he also initiated several policies and schemes which have significantly contributed to the welfare of the people of Andhra Pradesh. Notable among these are the construction of over two lakh pucca houses for the needy and the Rs. 2 per kg rice scheme. I recall when I was Governor of Andhra Pradesh and NTR was Chief Minister, I had suggested to him that in every house provided to the underprivileged, coconut plants should be planted so that people can derive some income as well. NTR readily agreed and implemented this suggestion with great enthusiasm. Similarly, I had once mentioned to him that it would be useful to set up modern facilities for medical treatment in Hyderabad so that people do not have to travel to Bombay and Madras. He took up this suggestion also and expanded the facilities available at the Nizam's Hospital into a specialties Hospital and changed the name from Nizam's Orthopaedic Hospital to Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences. I am told that state-of-the-art facilities for treatment of different types of ailments are now available readily in Hyderabad.

It would be wrong to view NTR as a leader only of the Telugu people. His vision was not confined to Andhra Pradesh. It encompassed the entire country. He was a national leader respected for his wisdom and sagacious counsel and for his commitment to democracy. Indeed, in an interview a few months before his victory in 1983, NTR had said : "I am a humanist. We must work hard and work together. We must rekindle the national spirit in every heart and make everybody feel proud of being Indian. We must try to build a better India to claim our rightful place in the comity of nations."

NTR was one of the prime movers behind the forging of the National Front of parties which worked as a unified opposition at the central level. He believed in a federal system of strong Centre and strong States. He had once described Centre-State relations by using the example of the human body, thus : "How can the body which is the Centre be strong if the limbs which represent the different States are weak?"

NTR also believed in cooperation and friendly relations at the inter-State level. He was a pioneer of the Telugu Ganga Project which, I am happy to learn, is at an advanced stage of completion. I am informed that the waters from the Krishna river have already been taken to Chennai city. The state of Tamil Nadu has benefitted from this project and large tracts of the Rayalaseema region are to be irrigated. The agricultural economy of this area is expected to receive a significant impetus. I think we can draw from this example, useful lessons and insights for handling contemporary problems and sensitive issues relating to the sharing of water and power resources between States. A spirit of cooperation and goodwill based on mutual trust and mutual benefit, a policy of dialogue and discussion and of mutual accommodation and give-and-take can go a long way in resolving complex and highly emotional and politically sensitive inter-State issues. Indeed, this is the essence of the democratic process, as we have known it over several millennia. The *Rig Veda* states :

“सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्।
समानं मंत्रम् अभिमंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोभि।
समानी व आकुतिः समाना हृदयानि वः
समानम् अस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति।”

(Assemble, speak among yourselves as one, be united in your minds, partake together of common benefits,
May your aims be one and true.
May your assembly be synthesised, harmonious,
A common purpose do I lay before you; address your endeavours unitedly,
Common be your aim and your hearts united;
May you be of one mind that all may gain true happiness)

The philosophy of NTR's life was summed up by him in this evocative and thoughtful response to the question : "What Godly role did you enjoy playing most?" NTR replied: "I like playing Rama's role in films. In politics I would rather play Krishna's role."

I am glad that the Andhra Pradesh government has undertaken several projects and activities in memory of NTR. The National Film Award which carries his name has been bestowed upon Shri Akkineni Nageswara Rao, a close friend and compatriot in films, of Anna. If I may say so, NTR and Nageswara Rao have been the two pillars of Telugu cinema. And it is fitting that the NTR Film

Award should go to Shri Nageswara Rao, another legend of Telugu cinema. Over sixty years he has enthralled the audiences with his powerful portrayals in socially meaningful and relevant films. His splendid and dramatic performances in films such as *Bangaru Kutumbam* and *Sudigundalu* have influenced the younger generation against corrupting social influences. Several of his films have won national awards. I am happy to felicitate him today for being the first recipient of the NTR National Film Award.

I am also happy to have been associated with this function and would like to thank the organizers for inviting me and giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts on this occasion. Let us all derive sustenance and inspiration from the life and work of NTR, a remarkable personality of our times and strive collectively to inculcate the timeless values of love, compassion and service amongst our people. Thus will we make our country strong and improve the welfare and well-being of our people. Thus will we carry our great country forward.

Independent Judiciary is Vital to Democracy

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly organized by the Supreme Court Bar Association. I thank the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Shri A.M. Ahmadi and the President of the Bar Association, Shri R.K. Jain for their thoughtful invitation to me.

It is most appropriate that the Bar Association should have organized this function to commemorate this important anniversary. So many of our great national leaders who contributed to the fashioning of our Constitution were jurists of distinction. The many finely trained legal minds who participated in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly included : Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, Shri Govind Vallabh Pant, Shri K.M. Munshi, Shri Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, Shri B.N. Rau, Shri B.L. Mitter, Shri S. Varadachariar, Shri Kailash Nath Katju, Smt. G. Durgabai and Shri M.A. Ayyangar.

The Bar Association is heir to a rich tradition of service to the nation in the spheres of social and political advancement throughout the building and operation of a sensitive and responsive judicial system. I am glad, therefore, that they are undertaking a series of programmes and seminars throughout the year in order to create more widespread public awareness about the historic and magnificent work of the Constituent Assembly, the significance of our Constitution, and the very tangible manner in which it is contributing to the progress and prosperity of our society.

Our long and arduous struggle for freedom was essentially a struggle for the Rule of Law, a struggle for the values of equality, respect for human dignity and justice. It drew sustenance from our ancient ethos of toleration and respect for diverse points of view, of pluralism and oneness, of consensus and mutual accommodation. Dharma or the Rule of Law, has been recognized as vital for the well-being of our society. As stated in the *Karna Parva* of the *Mahabharata*:

“धारणाद् धर्मामित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।
यत् स्याद् धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ।”

(Dharma is for the stability of society, the maintenance of social order and the general well-being and progress of humankind. Whatever conduces to the fulfilment of these objects is Dharma; that is definite.)

Indeed it is most appropriate that the motto of the Supreme Court of India is:

“यतो धर्मस्ततो जय”

(Where there is fulfilment of Dharma, there is Victory).

The Judiciary has the vital function of upholding Dharma. Our Constitution recognized the pivotal importance of the Judiciary, as the guardian of the Constitution. This profound awareness was expressed in beautiful and telling words by Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru while speaking in the Lok Sabha on 14 March 1995. He said:

“... the fundamental basis of this Constitution and our general practice in this country is to have an independent and powerful judiciary.”

Panditji stressed the need for the independence of the Judiciary and its being powerful. There was unanimity in the Constituent Assembly that it was essential to have a completely independent Judiciary, ‘an impregnable fortress,’ as it were, impervious to pressure and beyond reproach. The experience of our leaders during colonial rule strengthened the demand for a separation of the Executive from the Judiciary. Article 50 of the Directive Principles of State Policy articulated this concern.

“The State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State.”

The founding fathers paid meticulous attention to the task of ensuring and safeguarding the independence of the Judiciary, its jurisdiction and powers, the calibre and status of those manning it and their conditions of tenure. The various provision of the Constitution in Chapter IV of Part V of the Constitution and Chapter V of Part VI of the Constitution reflect the determination and clarity of vision with which the founding fathers accomplished their task in this respect.

Another preception of profound significance to our polity arising out of the deep awareness and far-sighted perspective of the Constituent Assembly, was the idea of *unified Judiciary*, as an institutional framework which would contribute solidly to the strengthening of national unity and oneness. It is such remarkable insight into the inner processes of our parliamentary democracy, the mechanics of the day-to-day working of our polity, that informs the brilliant observation by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He said :

“ one single intergrated judiciary having jurisdiction and providing remedies in all cases under the Constitutional Law, the Civil Law or the Criminal Law...” is “...essential to maintain the unity of our country.”

The Constitution of India has provided the framework within which individual rights are safeguarded and social well-being is enhanced. It has established a harmonious balance between the

rights of the individual and the good of society as a whole. The Right to Constitutional Remedies enshrined in Article 32 of our Constitution provides for the enforcement of the provisions of Part III on Fundamental Rights. The writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and its powers to issue directions or orders or writs confers a role of profound importance on the Court. Indeed, I have often said that the Supreme Court of India is a bulwark for safeguarding human rights. I would, in particular, mention Article 13 which declares void laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the Fundamental Rights. Simultaneously, the concept of 'reasonable restrictions' has been refined and developed to make for a judicious synthesis of individual and public or national interest.

Over the last five decades or so, the Judiciary has played a role of far-reaching significance in dealing with the relationship between law and the lives of individuals and of society. The Judiciary administers the law but equally, and in some cases, more importantly, also makes law in the context of our common law system, including our system of precedents. Judicial interpretation of the provisions of our Constitution and the laws has resulted in a series of decisions that have safeguarded and upheld the national, public and individual interest, fundamental human freedoms and the cause of Justice. By consistently, sensitively, and expertly interpreting the provisions of the Constitution and the laws, in tune with the requirements of justice, the Supreme Court has helped magnify the majesty of law in giving relief to members of the public and thus, in the aggregate, making for a better and safer life for our nation.

As I indicated earlier, our Constitution encapsulates the vision of our society for progress, prosperity and emancipation. It is the vision of 'Purna Swaraj' in all its varied dimensions. The Constitution and the laws are essential catalytic entities in this dynamic striving of the people for a better life.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and other members of the Constituent Assembly had held the firm conviction that law is an instrument for social change; that law synthesizes change and stability; that law must be a 'variable constant'; that law subsists on the basis of objective appreciation of truth and social good.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while speaking on the Draft Constitution on 8 November 1948, had expressed these ideas thus :

“The Constitution if it is out of touch with the people's

life, aims and aspirations becomes rather empty; ... a Constitution should ... be flexible.”

Later in May 1951 he said :

“A Constitution to be living must be growing; must be adaptable; must be flexible; must be changeable... Therefore, it is desirable and a good thing for people to realize that this very fine Constitution that we have fashioned after years of labour is good in so far as it goes but as society changes, as conditions change we amend it in the proper way. It is not like the unalterable law of Medes and Persians that it cannot be changed, although the world around may change.”

The Judiciary, and in this term I would include members of the Bar, have vindicated Panditji's philosophy. They have ensured that law advances the cause of social welfare in a tangible and effective manner in our society. Without amendments to the Constitution also, through interpretation of the law, the Judiciary has been instrumental in the process of law adapting itself to the needs of changing times. Many landmark decisions on matters of public interest, like those relating to environmental issues, greater transparency and accountability of administration, have made an enduring impact on our society.

The Bar should be recognized as an integral component of the Judiciary. The Bench and the Bar, together comprise the judicial mechanism. It is their joint duty, their ‘Dharma’, to exemplify and give effect to the inextricable and organic link between Law, Truth and Social Welfare. It is their responsibility to ensure that these noble goals are always upheld.

Acumen, knowledge, commitment and high moral and ethical stature of the Bar are critical to the appropriate functioning of our judicial system. By forceful articulation of cases and the ability to separate the grain from the chaff, the Bar should assist in the cause of Justice by bringing forth truth and nothing but the truth before the Court. I am glad that we have developed and drawn upon the concept of ‘Amicus Curiae’ — friend of the Court — whereby members of the Bar are to assist the Court in comprehending and assessing the facts of any case, the relevant law and its particular application in the matter and identifying the appropriate view or remedy as required.

India is proud of her active, strong and independent Judiciary. Our learned judges and members of the Bar have lived up to the expectations of the people and have strengthened our democratic polity.

I am sure that in the years and decades ahead the Bench and the Bar in India will go from strength to strength in achieving greater and greater success in the service of the nation, the cause of Justice, the goal of building a Welfare State, and a society corresponding to the dreams of those who gave their all in the struggle for freedom and who laboured in the Constituent Assembly of India five decades ago.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating your celebrations. I wish you all every success in your endeavours in the months and years ahead.

Netaji : Stalwart of Our Freedom Struggle

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to unveil the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, an illustrious freedom fighter and an embodiment of courage, during his birth centenary year. It is fitting that his statue will find pride of place of in the precincts of Parliament House. This is a commendable decision.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's life is a saga of courage and sacrifice. He plunged into the freedom struggle in 1921, and suffered imprisonment on numerous occasions. He was repeatedly incarcerated by the imperial authorities. His health deteriorated rapidly in jail. The colonial administration always kept a close watch and scrutiny on his activities. Despite these trials and sufferings, he remained ever courageous. His activities, imbued with supreme patriotism and dynamism continued with renewed vigour. He remained steadfast and committed to his principles on which he never compromised, even against difficult odds.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was one of the stalwarts of our

freedom struggle. After returning from England in 1921, he joined our freedom movement under the leadership of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. During the disastrous floods of 1922 in Bengal, Netaji demonstrated his organizational abilities and his spirit of service with his selfless work and activities to ameliorate the difficulties and sufferings of the people. In 1924, at the young age of 27, he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. During his tenure, his revolutionary activities caused annoyance to the British Government. It was during this time that he was arrested and sent to Rangoon. In 1930 when he was in prison, he was elected Mayor of Calcutta. But the British Government was determined not to allow him to remain free to participate in the struggle. He was re-arrested in 1932 and exiled from the country soon thereafter.

This exile marked the beginning of a new phase in the life of Subhas Chandra Bose. He took up the challenge of preparing public opinion abroad and obtaining international support for India's freedom. In 1938, he was elected President of the Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress by acclamation. He also chaired the Tripura Session in 1939. Soon thereafter he left the country and established the Azad Hind Fauj for the speedy liberation of our Motherland. This created a new enthusiasm and exhilaration amongst our freedom fighters.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's primary goal was the liberation of India. Even though he was unable to see for himself his dream coming true, the sacrifices which he made during this great era of the freedom movement are of immense historical importance. The extent to which he attracted our younger generation towards the freedom struggle and the manner in which he inspired and enthused them, is indeed remarkable. He deeply wished to see our country become independent so that India could herself be in control of her own destiny. In his address to the students of Tokyo University in 1944, he explained why he was striving for India's Independence and why he believed that as an independent country India had a glorious future. He said that the only reason for this belief was his deep and abiding conviction that India has an immense reservoir of inner strength and capabilities to survive and progress both individually and collectively as a nation.

I feel we must always remember that Netaji's struggle was not for India's freedom alone, but a struggle against colonialism and imperialism throughout the world. He viewed the struggle of

the people of India as a struggle for humanity as a whole. In his address as President of the Haripura Congress Session on 19 February, 1938, he concluded his speech with the following words, which I wish to quote:

“Ours is a struggle not only against British imperialism but against world imperialism as well, of which the former is the key-stone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved...”

Netaji's oratory and the self-confidence reflected in his speeches, captivated the audiences and held them spellbound. He was clear in his objectives and determined to work untiringly to achieve them. This was a unique trait of his personality. Mahatma Gandhi had praised this attribute of Netaji's personality and he wrote in *Harijan* of 14 April 1946 : “Netaji was like my son.”

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had a clear vision of independent India. He elaborated this vision in his speech at the Haripura Session of the Congress. His deep understanding and the farsightedness of his vision never fails to impress me. As President of the Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress, he had said:

“The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the Indian people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programmes, the minority communities would be benefitted as much as any other section of the Indian population. Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines — as I have no doubt it will — it is the ‘have-nots’ who will be benefitted...”

Our primary goal today is national reconstruction and development. Our peoples' representatives have to take lead in this task. They should be symbols of sacrifice and service and should inspire and motivate our people. Today, when we have installed Netaji's statue in the Parliament House complex, let us all, and particularly the peoples' representatives in our democratic institutions, pledge to take the gains of freedom to every individual. Thus will our nation become strong and resilient. Thus will our people realize the true import and meaning of freedom, as understood and expounded by our great leaders like Netaji.

On behalf of our nation, I pay deep homage to Netaji.

“May India Be Glorious”

ON THE EVE of our Republic Day, I have great pleasure in extending to you my warm greetings and good wishes. I pray for your well-being, success and happiness. I pray for India's advancement from strength to strength, rising to her full potential as a progressive, prosperous and powerful nation, leading the world in the years to come, to a higher level of civilization. Indeed, this has been the dream, the vision, of the great stalwarts in our struggle for freedom. In India's emancipation they saw a new hope for humanity. I recall the inspiring words of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose birth centenary we are celebrating this year. In a broadcast over the Azad Hind Radio on 19 February 1942, Netaji had said: “Through India's liberation, will Asia and the world move forward towards the larger goal of human emancipation.”

Almost fifty years have passed since India became free. Half a century may not seem much to us Indians as citizens of a nation whose history spans several thousands of years. Yet this period is special, as our ancient nation renews itself, recreates itself and rediscovers, absorbs and assimilates the essentials of the democratic way of life. This process of transformation involves reinstating in our national life the values, norms and ideals which were our own contribution to the world's heritage of humanistic thought. Central to India's consciousness, these empowered our nation's greatness. When India moved away from these ideals the dark periods in our history occurred.

Equality, unity, an outlook of friendship and cooperation, a sense of duty and responsibility towards the nation, an approach based on integrity, selflessness and the spirit of service — are aspects of a composite code of ethical and moral values that must inform, permeate and pervade our national life. A high level of commitment in this respect is a *sine qua non* for the successful working of our elaborate, sensitive and interlinked systems of constitutional, political and administrative functions.

Republic Day, particularly in this auspicious Golden Jubilee year of Independence, is an appropriate occasion to review dispassionately our achievements, the extent to which we have progressed

in attaining our goals, the problems and difficulties we encounter and the steps we must take to overcome the challenges that confront us.

We citizens can justifiably be proud of India's achievements after Independence. Despite a variety of difficulties, it is readily acknowledged that in every sphere and sector, primary, secondary and tertiary, there has been tangible progress and positive attainment. Our nation has gained almost five decades of experience in the functioning of the parliamentary form of governance in a federal system. We are pressing ahead with democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj. We are well aware now of the strengths and advantages that democracy confers. Equally we ought to be sensitive to the principles and proprieties that need to be safeguarded to maintain and develop democratic institutions and processes on a wholesome basis in tune with the true interest of our nation and people.

Today we have the infrastructure for dynamic growth and progress. We have the constitutional, political and administrative framework that can be drawn upon to take India into the 21st century, closer to the goals that we have set ourselves — the goals of growth with social justice and the building of a Welfare State.

And yet who can deny the range of problems and deficiencies which cry for solution? Abject poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance torment many and raise questions as to the validity and efficaciousness of our policies and programmes. Crimes against weaker sections and women, acts of violence and intimidation, challenge our claims of building an egalitarian society. The fruits of progress to a substantial extent are negated by our burgeoning population and the complexities innate to the task of equitable distribution in a country of India's diversities and dimensions.

More than seven decades ago, Mahatma Gandhi had cautioned against what he termed as the Seven Social Sins. Writing in *Young India* in 1925, Bapu raised his finger against: Politics without Principles, Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Education without Character, Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity and Worship without Sacrifice.

I feel we need to ponder over Bapu's words. I feel convinced that India's need today is for a profound moral and ethical rejuvenation, the building of a nation-wide commitment to our national values and goals and the integration and unification of the people.

Simultaneously, there must be a forthright and outright rejection of casteism and communalism with its invidious, sinister nexus with corruption and criminality. Increasingly it is evident that India's failing to rid herself of these evils will aggravate the ills and vulnerabilities that vex our nation and lead to grave consequences. I sincerely hope the nation heeds Bapu's words.

As we look to the future we must keep two critical aspects clearly in mind. Our approach will have to be value-based and people-centred. Our many institutions of democratic governance and progress — Parliament, the Judiciary, the Executive, the Civil Services, the Press — can only be as effective as those responsible for the functioning of these institutions wish them to be. To safeguard our institutions from erosion and to build their strength and make them more efficient and responsive to the aspirations of the people, we must bring to bear the spirit of patriotic fervour, commitment, dedication, integrity and selfless service which imbued our struggle for freedom. These are the values that were illumined by our great national leaders. It is obvious that only by making these values an integral part of our life and work can we take our great nation forward and provide a productive and fulfilling life for our people. It is only in this manner that we can succeed in reinvigorating our public life and dispelling the cynicism, despondency and disenchantment that appear to be affecting the national atmosphere and mood.

Every citizen of India bears an immediate and direct responsibility. Patriotism requires a constant striving for excellence by every citizen as his or her own contribution to national reconstruction. We must all develop a broad nationalist outlook whereby we view every issue not in a limited, narrow or parochial perspective but in the context of the good of the nation. We must remain deeply conscious always that progress by individuals or groups in society is possible and meaningful only with national advancement.

The world today is witnessing significant global trends towards integration, both economic and political. New regimes for international economic exchange have been set in train. Powerful regional blocs have emerged. India must be well-prepared to deal with the situation involving these dynamic trends and to safeguard and advance national interest in the rapidly-changing international environment. A country of India's size and population with her vast pool of highly technically-trained manpower and institu-

tional infrastructure will have to ensure that scope is created for participation on a just and equal basis in the emerging world order.

Within our own region following several landmark developments, there are now significantly-improved prospects of peace, security and cooperation for mutual benefit. We will persevere in these efforts and shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

On the occasion of Republic Day, my thoughts are with our brave and valiant soldiers, sailors and airmen. The Indian armed forces serve the nation with professionalism, devotion and dedication under difficult and trying conditions. They deserve the nation's gratitude and tributes for their selfless service and sacrifice. On our part we have to ensure that our defence forces are well-equipped and preapred to safeguard the nation's territorial integrity and security.

Tomorrow when we unfurl the national tricolour, let us salute our flag of freedom, reiterate our national resolve and rededicate ourselves to our Motherland. The greatest democracy in the world must prove herself as a powerful force striving for universal values and ideals and contributing to global peace, friendship and progress.

Brothers and Sisters, may Reason guide us and may every citizen be a light unto himself and a friend to his neighbour. So may India be glorious.

Social Change through Women

I HAVE IMMENSE pleasure in associating myself with this Inter-Parliamentary Conference being held under the aegis of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. As the apex organization of parliamentarians and law-makers throughout the world, the IPU has rendered yeoman service in focussing international attention on crucial issues and challenges facing human society.

May I also extend a warm and cordial welcome to all the dignitaries and distinguished delegates present here, and specially those who have travelled from abroad to participate in this important Conference.

The theme "Partnership between Men and Women in Politics" that you have chosen for your meeting is particularly apposite and relevant at a time when there should be widespread global awareness of issues relating to gender equality. The fact that a pre-eminent international organization like the IPU has selected this issue, is a major advance by the global Women's Movement. I would like to congratulate the prime movers of the Conference on having succeeded in placing squarely the question of gender equality on the agenda for international political action.

Partnership of women and men in politics is a subject of vital significance as women, though comprising a large section of the world's population, remain largely excluded from the domain of politics. Some women have, of course, succeeded in reaching the highest levels of government in their own countries. The leadership provided by Smt. Indira Gandhi in India, Mrs. Golda Meir in Israel and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. has had a lasting impact on national and global politics. In contemporary times, we have eminent women as presidents or prime ministers in Bangladesh, Ireland and Sri Lanka. However, these instances are all too few and far between.

Politics as we know it today, is very much a male bastion; it has a very narrow base. The composition of most parliaments and legislatures testifies to this. In India, for instance, women comprise even less than eight per cent of the strength of the Lok Sabha. I understand that the position in most countries, with the notable exception of Nordic countries, is similar. Though there is universal adult franchise and all women have the right to vote, which they are exercising diligently, as our recent elections demonstrate, their representation in legislatures is grossly inadequate. There is a preponderance of male candidates put up by political parties for elective offices. Women candidates are few and women elected are even fewer.

Furthermore, though constitutional and legislative frameworks which grant women equal rights and opportunities are in place in most countries, these laws and enactments remain without material effect. Despite numerous guarantees and safeguards, gender

discrimination and prejudice remain a distressing reality. Traditional stereotypes of women, including amongst women themselves, persist. Clearly we have to do more to promote gender as a central issue in our political advancement.

This is all the more compelling when we note the powerful and influential role which women have historically played, particularly in mass political movements. Indeed, the participation of women has been a critical factor in imparting strength and sustenance to all major political struggles. In India, we have a long and proud experience of women who actively participated in and contributed to our political life. During the freedom struggle, the Indian National Congress was led by illustrious women like Dr. Annie Besant and Sarojini Naidu. Many patriotic women, including Kasturba Gandhi, Madam Bhikaji Cama, Kamala Nehru, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kriplani, Aruna Asaf Ali and Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh plunged into our nationalist movement. Mahatma Gandhi's calls for civil disobedience and non-cooperation mobilized ordinary womenfolk from urban as well as rural areas, in large numbers. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's charismatic leadership and dynamism attracted many brave women as soldiers in the ranks of the INA, who made glorious sacrifices for the cause of freedom.

Even during earlier times, women were deeply respected and revered and they had a high status in society. Our tradition states:

“यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता”

(Gods reside where women are revered)

Ahilyabai Holkar, an illustrious figure of the 18th century, though a young widow surrounded by intrigue and machinations, astutely held her own as a monarch and check-mated powerful adversaries against her kingdom. Her administration is remembered to this day for her enlightened leadership and foresight. There are other such examples.

But such historical experience has been exceptional. It has to be admitted that, generally, there has been a lack of participation of women in political life. We have to ask ourselves as to the reasons for this. Is it not true that women are unable to participate as partners in politics basically because of deep-rooted social prejudice?

The concept of 'partnership' between women and men involves

a powerful message of mutual trust, equality and common endeavour towards shared objectives. This profound thought is reflected in what Mahatma Gandhi had said in a speech delivered almost eighty years ago, in Mumbai on 20 February 1928: "Man and woman are of equal rank, but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair, being supplementary to one another; each helps the other,... Anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of them both." I believe that this clear and unambiguous message is of timeless relevance. Women and men who collectively comprise human society, can only progress together in partnership. The role of women as a powerful force for social change was demonstrated during the early decades of this century, when Mahatma Gandhi successfully mobilised women to picket liquor-shops in order to curb the drinking habit — a rampant social evil — amongst the menfolk.

The challenge facing society is to impart practical content to the concept of partnership and to operationalize it by empowering women. In India, our national leaders such as Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had long realized that women must be a central focus of our developmental strategy. Whether it is in the field of health, nutrition, education or family welfare, tangible and sustained progress is possible only by focussing on the woman and the girl child, who remain among the most vulnerable, weak and deprived sections of society. It is only by empowering women through education and training, enabling them to achieve financial security and ensuring their participation in decision-making processes, that they can come into the mainstream of our developmental programmes. However, this is a long-term approach. In the immediate, it is essential to take measures which can redress the current situation.

An important beginning has recently been made in India by reserving a third of the membership in institutions of local self-government in urban as well as rural areas, for women. A historic advance has been achieved. As many as a million women in our country have been brought into the decision-making process in local bodies as a result of this significant political and constitutional reform. Proposals for similar reservation of seats in State Legislatures and the Parliament are under discussion and there is endorsement for this approach from political parties. It is conceivable that in the forthcoming session of Parliament itself, there could be a major step forward in this respect.

I am glad that your Conference will examine ways and means

for encouraging women to put forth their candidatures for elective office. Training programmes which prepare women for political leadership as well as schemes of financial assistance in support of political campaigns of women, could be devised. Our political parties, legislatures and the Government have a special responsibility in this regard. I trust this Conference would come up with agreed recommendations on some of these issues, which could be implemented in a time-bound manner.

However, these measures are not enough. We must root out the prejudice against women and the negative attitude towards their participation in politics. Women themselves will, of course, advocate their cause and intensify the momentum for change. National groups for women's emancipation could draw guidance and inspiration from the international movement. They should look for allies across the political spectrum and also amongst men, in a spirit of true partnership, in this cause. In this manner, they will strengthen the consensus for gender equality and full participation in politics.

I am confident your Conference will help focus public attention on this important issue that requires political will and concerted political action. I am sure this Conference will prove to be a major landmark in the history of the International Women's Movement and, more so, in the struggle for building a better world, a just, humane society, for the good of all.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Conference and I wish your deliberations all success.

Krishna Menon: A Many-sided Personality

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with this function in memory of the late Shri V.K. Krishna Menon. A few days back, on 3 May at the request of the Minister for Human Resources Development, Shri Bommai, I garlanded the statue of

Speech at the birth centenary celebration of V.K. Krishna Menon in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 6 May 1997

Shri Krishna Menon near Sena Bhawan, on his one-hundred-and-first birth anniversary. It is appropriate that Members of Parliament are meeting here today to pay tributes to a man who strove with courage, vision and perseverance for the cause of freedom and in the task of building a better future for India and the world.

The most striking feature of Shri Krishna Menon was the force of his personality and the sheer brilliance of his intellect. No one could remain indifferent to him. He aroused strong feelings and emotions in all who came into contact with him. His qualities of head and heart, his staunch patriotism, socialist ideal and anti-imperialist commitments led to the growth of a life-long friendship with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Panditji often used to refer to Krishna Menon as a 'kindred spirit'. Many of these qualities and attributes of Krishna Menon's personality were recognized early on in his youth by Dr. Annie Besant when he was associated with the Theosophical Society and Scouts Movement. She encouraged him to go to London for higher education. This marked the beginning of a long, eventful and illustrious career of public service.

Passionately devoted to the cause of freedom, a young and dynamic Krishna Menon spent long years in England, working assiduously and with determination to mould British public opinion in favour of Indian Independence. Empowered by an unshakeable conviction in the righteousness of his cause — complete independence and sovereignty, not dominion status with fetters attached — Krishna Menon became the moving spirit and inspiration behind the India League. His speeches, articles, pamphlets, constant and intensive interaction with opinion-makers and the forging of contacts between Indian leaders and British politicians, contributed to a growing awareness in Britain about the reality of the Indian situation. These efforts strengthened the opinion, specially, among the Socialists and the Labour Party that India's freedom was an imperative which could not be denied or even delayed.

Krishna Menon once referred to the work of the India League in these words:

"The India League was an organization in Britain to work for Indian freedom. The workers of the League were both British and Indian, mostly the former. Its appeal was directed to the British people who were then responsible for the Government of India. The greater part of the work was done by the British organizations, Members of Parliament and societies."

He did not add that it was only through his own tireless activities that he turned passive supporters into active proponents for our freedom and neutralized the opposition to our cause. Among those associated with the India League were stalwarts such as Harold Laski, Bertrand Russell, Stafford Cripps and Pethick Lawrence. Indeed, Bertrand Russell was Chairman of India League at one time. Krishna Menon won respect and admiration for his work. Harold Laski, the eminent Socialist Professor, friend and mentor of Krishna Menon who later became the Chairman of the Labour Party, spoke about Krishna Menon's role in these words :

“...(Krishna Menon) played a very considerable part in the conversion of the Labour Party to a sense of duty that it had to perform.”

The skills of debate, discussion, negotiation, forceful persuasion and conciliation honed in the boroughs of London and in the forums of the Labour Party, were put to effective and productive use by Krishna Menon, first as independent India's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and later at the United Nations. His presentation and defence of our position on Kashmir at the United Nations, then the single most important issue for India, vital for her unity, integrity and secular identity, won him encomiums from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

In a speech in Chennai on 31 January 1957, Panditji referred to his contributions thus :

“Our case was presented before the Security Council by my colleague Krishna Menon, and I want to tell you that he did this work brilliantly and most effectively, and the line he took there represented completely our views on the subject. I say this although it was not necessary for me to say so... Nevertheless, I want to say it because there are some people in this country and some people in other countries whose job in life appears to be try to run down Krishna Menon, because he is far cleverer than they are, because his record of service for Indian freedom is far longer than theirs, and because he has worn himself out in the service of India.”

In the United Nations, Krishna Menon emerged as one of the most creative, effective and successful practitioners of diplomacy. He championed the cause of national liberation and independence throughout the world. As an articulate exponent of India's policy of

peace and non-alignment, he believed that solidarity among developing countries was essential to safeguard and consolidate the gains of freedom and protect themselves from exploitation. Naturally, this policy attracted criticism from some quarters but invariably it was criticism tinged with admiration for an extremely capable individual who laboured against all odds, not only for his own country but for freedom, justice and equality for the peoples of the world.

Frequently, Krishna Menon's advice and intervention was solicited to assist in the resolution of knotty international issues. His contribution in the resolution of the Suez crisis and in the setting up of the United Nations Emergency Force together with his role on the Korean question is widely acknowledged. Smt. Indira Gandhi in her tribute to Krishna Menon on 18 November 1974, had described his work in the field of international affairs in these words:

“He was known for finding solutions to any problem of any country; and if it was rejected, he had another solution straight-away from another angle, so that he was someone who was not only an advocate of India's freedom and India's independent thinking and action, but he was a friend of all those who were in a similar position, those who were newly becoming independent and those who had to chart a course. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to all those so-called developing countries.”

V.K. Krishna Menon's role as Union Defence Minister has been assessed variously. It is for historians to document and fully elucidate his contributions in the context of India's defence preparedness. However, it is an acknowledged fact that Krishna Menon was instrumental in laying solid foundations for self-reliance in the sphere of defence production, crucial for safeguarding and defending our freedom. If today we have developed a well-diversified network of ordnance factories and have made commendable strides towards our goal of self-reliance in the requirements of the Army, Navy and Air Force, we should be thankful to Krishna Menon for the vision and determination with which he worked.

I believe that Shri Krishna Menon's contributions towards our freedom as well as the important part he played in articulating and effectively implementing the foreign policy of independent India fashioned by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, require to be better understood and appreciated. I hope that friends and admirers of

Krishna Menon would do full justice to his role in the shaping of India's destiny by creating a better and more informed awareness about Krishna Menon: the man, the activist, the leader, the diplomat and statesman.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the people, I pay tributes to the memory of this great patriot and noble son of India.

Dr. Zakir Husain — A Many-Splendoured Personality

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the birth centenary celebrations of our former President, the late Dr. Zakir Husain. I pay tributes to the memory of this illustrious son of India, whose contributions in diverse spheres of nation-building will always be remembered.

Zakir Saheb was a many-splendoured personality. An eminent educationist, an ardent nationalist, passionately committed to the cause of freedom and national unity, Zakir Saheb walked the path of duty and righteousness, spreading the wisdom of our ethos and its message of cultural pluralism and oneness.

Zakir Saheb added lustre to every office he adorned. As Vice-Chancellor, Governor, Vice-President and President of India, Zakir Saheb played an important part in shaping and guiding the destiny of our nation. A scholar-statesman, he brought to bear in his work erudition and learning, discipline, high moral and ethical values, an innate courtesy and graciousness and a special sensitivity and understanding of the problems and concerns of the common people.

Dr. Zakir Husain considered himself to be first and foremost, a teacher and an educationist. Indeed, while accepting the office of the President of India, on 9 May 1967, he said:

“My choice to this high office has mainly, if not entirely, been made on account of my long association with the education of my people. I maintain that education is a prime instrument of national

purpose and that the quality of its education is inescapably involved in the quality of the nation.”

Education and nationalism were the twin lodestars of Dr. Zakir Husain's long and illustrious career in public service. Together they comingled, each supplementing the other, each drawing sustenance from and in turn, imparting strength and resilience to the other.

During the Non-Cooperation Movement launched in solidarity with the Khilafat Committee in 1920, Mahatma Gandhi's call to the youth to quit institutions aided or assisted by the British Government stirred the souls of thousands of young women and men. The Mohemmadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, the pre-eminent educational institution for Muslims in India, could not remain unaffected by Bapu's clarion call. A band of nationalist-minded individuals led by stalwarts such as Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Mohammed Ali, Dr. Ansari and Zakir Saheb, with the benevolent support and encouragement of Bapu, decided to leave M.A.O. College and start their own institution.

This was also the turning-point in Zakir Saheb's life. It was the beginning of a long and close association with Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom struggle. The vehicle through which Zakir Saheb contributed to the struggle was Jamia Millia Islamia, which was born during this period of great political flux in our society. Under Zakir Saheb's stewardship, it became a symbol of national unity and yearning for freedom. Zakir Saheb once described the ideals of Jamia in these words :

“To understand the Jamia's ideals, it is enough to know that it was born in times when Islam and Muslims were in a sorry plight and the two great communities of India, the Hindus and the Muslims, had joined hands in a concerted effort. Bearing this in mind, the Jamia, which is connected with both, Islam on the one hand and the nation at large on the other, will ... help in the realization of the ideal of a common nationhood and the achievement of the freedom of the country.”

A close associate and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Zakir Saheb was also drawn to Bapu's scheme of Basic Education through manual labour and vocational activity. He extended support to the

concept that “true learning can be imparted only through doing” and that the central principle of Basic Education should be the development of intellect through handwork. He even began a pilot project on “Bunyadi Taleem” at Jamia. I believe, it is important to pay renewed attention to Bapu’s philosophy of basic education and Zakir Saheb’s approach, if we are to prepare our children for a life in harmony with their social and natural surroundings.

Zakir Saheb was a resplendent symbol and a product of our composite culture. He believed deeply that the diverse strands of our heritage had intermingled over the centuries to fashion our unique pluralistic ethos. The trauma and turmoil of the period before Partition which sought to deny this heritage, deeply distressed him. He tried, unsuccessfully, to quench the fires of communalism. He invited leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to share the same platform at Jamia in November 1946, where with deep anguish, he appealed :

“You are all stars of the political firmament; there is love and respect for you... For God’s sake, put your heads together and extinguish this fire.”

These words of Dr. Zakir Husain were recalled by Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, thirty years ago, in 1967, because, as Jayaprakashji said:

“their message is so fresh even today, and because the present stars of the political firmament need also to be roused to their simple human and national duty.”

Zakir Saheb’s comprehension of the importance of a pluralistic outlook for world peace and appreciation of the oneness of the inner doctrine of all the world’s religions is reflected in these words:

“We want peace between the individuals and groups within nations. These are all vitally interdependent. If the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, Buddha’s philosophy of compassion, the Hindu concept of Ahimsa, and the passion of Islam for obedience to the will of God can combine, then we would succeed in generating the most potent influence for world peace.”

A deeply cultured and accomplished individual, Zakir Saheb had a wide variety of interests and hobbies ranging from flowers

and fossils, literature and poetry to art, calligraphy and music. His distinction was also reflected in a certain natural modesty. It is said that when Dr. Zakir Husain as Vice President met Hussain the painter, with characteristic self-effacement, he introduced himself saying: "*Khaksaar ko bhi Husain kehte hain*".

Steeped in learning, both ancient and modern, of the East and West, Zakir Saheb was at home as much with Plato's *Republic*, which he translated into Urdu, and the works of German philosophers, as he was with Urdu and Persian literature. His felicity in German enabled him to transmit the message of Bapu to the German people in their own language in his book *Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhi*. Zakir Saheb was also a story-teller par excellence. Children were enchanted by his stories and fables.

Today, as we celebrate the birth centenary of Dr. Zakir Husain, I am reminded of some words of Mahatma Gandhi from his message on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Jamia Millia Islamia on 16 August, 1946:

"The goodness of a good man is itself his true jubilee. Dr. Zakir Husain's great work itself is his true greatness."

There is a poignant story eloquently revealing the depth of Zakir Saheb's commitment to Bapu's ideals and India's struggle. Begum Zakir Husain, in the midst of her sorrow after his tragic death, had reminded people at that time that Zakir Saheb had used 'khadi' for his clothes all his life and that his shroud too should be of 'khadi'.

I once again pay my respectful tributes to the memory of this enlightened soul. May we the people of India draw inspiration and sustenance from the life and contributions of Dr. Zakir Husain. May we all follow the example of high moral rectitude, integrity, deep learning, compassion, spiritual awareness, patriotism and unbounded love for the people which filled every pore of his being. May his life be a constant beacon and inspire us to work for peace, harmony and oneness and the progress, prosperity and well-being of our people. I conclude with some words of a poet which I believe apply in full measure to Dr. Zakir Husain:

“मत सहल इसे जानो फिरता है फ़लक बरसों,
तब खाक के पर्दे से इंसान निकलता है।”

It Is Not Winning Alone That Matters

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be present with athletes, sportspersons and thousands of spectators here, in the impressive Sri Kanteerava Stadium in Bangalore. It is fitting that the Fourth National Games — India's premier national sporting event — are being hosted by Karnataka, a State which has given to our nation several outstanding sports personalities. I recall among others, the names of Ashwini Nachappa in Athletics, Prakash Padukone in Badminton, Rajagopal in Hockey, Arathi Ponappa in Tennis, Meghana Narayan in Swimming and specially Malathi Holla, who in spite of being physically challenged has emerged as an excellent sportsperson. The Indian Olympics Association, the Karnataka government as well as all those who have been associated with the preparations for this grand event deserve our commendation. It is through their strenuous efforts that the requisite sports infrastructure of international standards has been set up in Bangalore for these games. These facilities would not only provide a significant impetus for the promotion of sports in Karnataka, but also represent a step in the direction of fulfilling our dream of hosting the Olympic Games in India, I hope, in the not-too-distant future.

I understand that six thousand athletes are competing in twenty-seven disciplines in these Games. Years of rigorous training, practice and discipline have been crowned with the selection of these young women and men for this prestigious event. I wish them success in their endeavours.

It is important to remember that it is not winning alone which matters. Every participant must give his or her very best in a spirit of friendly competition. The National Games are not only about winning or losing, or of displaying the high standards achieved by players in different sports. They are a symbol of our nationhood, our unity and oneness. Participating in the Games will be an enriching experience, an opportunity to make friends, exchange experiences and to witness the vibrant diversity and essential unity of our great nation. When the players return home, I hope they would do so with a feeling of satisfaction at their own performance and pride in our motherland and her people.

With these, words, I declare the Fourth National Games, 1997 open.

Our Parliament — Symbol of Collective Striving for Common Goals

I AM DEEPLY touched and moved by the gesture of the Hon'ble parliamentarians who have assembled here to felicitate me. This is a rare honour, the memory of which I shall always cherish.

As the apex democratic institution of our nation, the world's largest democracy, our Parliament has a unique sanctity. It is my privilege and good fortune to have been associated in some manner with Parliament and with other Legislatures for over four decades. It is a special pleasure to see here many personal friends. I have deep admiration for the contributions of our eminent parliamentarians to the strengthening of our democratic processes. I thank the Hon'ble Speaker, and through him all Members of Parliament, for his warm farewell address and for the kind words expressed towards me.

Our Parliament represents the creative diversity of our great nation. Equally, it is a symbol of collective striving for common goals. As I look around this august assembly, I see my compatriots from various parties, regions and walks of life, some of whom were with me in Parliament when I became a Member, about three decades ago. They represent the vibrancy and splendour of our great civilization. Today, the rich pluralism of our country is reflected in the number of parties represented in this House. This is symbolic of the gradual enrichment and advancement of political processes in our democracy. As our society advances and progresses, new challenges emerge. Our system of cooperative federalism has proven to be resilient and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. Regional aspirations have always been harmonized with nationalist goals. We should pay tribute to the founding fathers of the

Constitution for their vision and to our parliamentarians, who have discharged their responsibilities with sincerity and commitment. They have articulated the problems and concerns, not merely of their own constituencies, states or regions but of the entire nation. As Panditji said, every parliamentarian is a member not only for his or her particular constituency but a Member for India.

As the repositories of the aspirations and yearnings, the hopes and dreams of the people, as their chosen leaders, parliamentarians have the task of strengthening our democratic ethos and taking our great nation forward. The path for progress has already been illumined by the great stalwarts of our freedom struggle who inspired millions of people throughout the world to strive for peace and harmony, equality, justice, dignity and secularism. During this Golden Jubilee year of our Independence, let us pledge to uphold these values and ideals and rededicate ourselves to work with a spirit of selfless service for the well-being and prosperity of our nation.

The last few years have been momentous years for our democracy. Complex political situations have been effectively dealt with by our democratic institutions. As the constitutional head dealing with political processes as they evolved, particularly over the last two years, three principles and one goal were foremost in my mind: these were impartiality, constitutional propriety and transparency and the paramountcy of national interest. These determined my mission along with the oath I had been privileged to take. The words of advice I received from many of you were of immense benefit in the discharge of my responsibilities. I thank all of you for your support, assistance and friendship.

As I bid farewell, I wish you, and through you, our masters, the people of India, all success in our common endeavours to make our democracy ever stronger, vigorous and dynamic. This is our designated path as a nation and a people.

Our motherland has had a glorious past and shall have an even more radiant future. I have immense faith in the talents and creative energies of our people and the people's representatives. The future is in our hands. Together, let us make it bright and luminous. Let us light a candle of hope and joy in every home. I conclude with this ancient Upanishadic prayer, for the salvation of individuals, society, nation and, indeed, for human civilization:

“असतो मा सद्गमय
तमसो मा ज्योर्तिगमय”

(Lead me from untruth to truth
from darkness to light)

Farewell with a Sense of Fulfilment and Optimism

BEFORE I DEMIT office I would like to convey to each and every citizen my personal greetings and good wishes. I pray for the continued progress, prosperity and glory of our nation. I am confident that India will advance to the forefront in the march of humanity for a better world.

During the five decades of freedom, we have made great strides for the well-being of our people. Our democracy has flourished. It has withstood all obstacles and adversities. Indeed, every challenge over the decades has made us grow stronger and more resilient. Democratic institutions have flowered from the grassroots to every level of society. New content and meaning is being imparted to democratic processes through Panchayati Raj.

We have defended our freedom and the gains of freedom. These had been won with great sacrifices and in the face of many challenges. We can justifiably be proud of our manifold achievements secured without compromising on the ideals of our democratic ethos. The nation expresses gratitude to our valiant defence forces and other services for their contributions.

Political freedom becomes meaningful when we are able to meet the basic needs of our people. We can derive satisfaction from the advances we have made in the sphere of economic development. The application of science and technology for the welfare of the masses is a spectacular achievement after Independence. The Green Revolution has brought with it self-sufficiency in foodgrains. Today, we feed a population three times that at the dawn of freedom. India can be proud of nurturing and developing a vast pool of highly

technically-trained manpower and an impressive network of educational and research institutions of excellence. The process of economic restructuring will liberate the hidden springs of creative energy of our talented people. New prospects for growth and improvement in the quality of life of the people have emerged as India seeks a fair and equal partnership in the world economy.

And yet, for securing the goal of Growth with Social Justice, a sincere nation-wide commitment should imbue our efforts to take the fruits of development to the poorest and the down trodden. This calls for upholding the moral and ethical values of our civilization, values illumined during our freedom struggle and personified by the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The Golden Jubilee year of our Independence, provides an opportunity to all of us, individually and collectively, for introspection and reflection, a moment to delve deep into our conscience and to see how we can become better, more caring and considerate human beings. Let us draw sustenance and inspiration from the example set by the martyrs of our struggle for freedom, the heroic freedom fighters and great national leaders. Thus can we make our nation great.

When I assumed this august office in July 1992, I had said that secularism — respect for all religions — is our national creed. Indeed, it is of the very spirit of our nationhood. This is a philosophy radiated over the ages by our ethos. This is the inner message of all religions. Toleration and respect for diversity is what imparts the strength to our civilization. It is this democratic approach, the approach of peace, love and brotherhood, which has made our civilization endure and become glorious. Let us cherish our great heritage of thought for the good of all humanity.

Shri K.R. Narayanan, a scholar and thinker of great distinction and a leader of vision and wisdom, will preside over the destiny of our nation. Upon him rests the challenging responsibility of being at the helm as our nation progresses into the twenty-first century. I wish him every success and happiness in the years ahead.

I bid farewell with a sense of fulfilment and immense optimism for our nation as it marches forward with dignity and confidence. I thank all of you, dear citizens, for the abundant love and innumerable kindnesses, showered on me by you over so many years.

II
ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS

Social Revolution through Traditional Arts and Crafts

I AM HAPPY to be with all of you on the occasion of the presentation of National Awards to eminent master craftspersons and weavers of India. These Awards represent a recognition of their creative efforts and extraordinary skills, as well as of their dedication to keeping alive a tradition of workmanship.

The beauty of our handicrafts and handlooms is widely acknowledged. However pleasing they may be as aesthetic objects, their real value lies in their cultural expression. Handicraft has as much individuality as a language or a social custom. It can be as expressive of a history or a tradition. Its preservation must, therefore, be accorded a high degree of importance. Traditional craft is a manifestation of the past in contemporary times. So great is its value that we must spare no effort in nurturing it.

Not all societies have had the good fortune of preserving their heritage. In modern times, industrialisation and mass production has wiped out the very concept of handicrafts from many parts of the world. Those who realise the folly of allowing this to happen are now painstakingly seeking to revive lost arts. We, in India, have managed to preserve our past to a greater extent. It is our duty to ensure that what has been preserved so far is strengthened rather than eroded with time.

Craft, as an aspect of culture, reflects the richness of our diversity. Each region, State and even villages have their own tradition, customs and ways of expression. The range of handicrafts and handlooms reveals the depth of our pluralism and constitutes the rich composite culture which is the hallmark of India.

Many of you may not have a direct recollection of our freedom struggle. In colonial times, foreign goods and culture had the pride of place. To admire another culture is not wrong, but to see one's own denigrated is unacceptable. Mahatma Gandhi gave great emphasis to regaining faith in ourselves, as a people and as a nation. He sought to revive our national pride by enhancing the value of our traditions. This expressed itself in various forms including

organising khadi and village industry exhibitions throughout the country. No session of the Indian National Congress was complete without one. Bapu maintained that they were the highest form of art. In his words : "All true art can be expressed not through an inanimate power-driven machinery, but only through the delicate living hands of men and womenfolk."

If the conservation of our heritage provided an impetus for the revival of handicrafts and handlooms, its employment aspect was no less important. India, as it is often said, is a nation of villages. Creation of rural employment was necessary to give Independence a meaning for the masses. The charkha became a symbol of this commitment because it solved the problem of economic distress in a most simple manner. Encouragement to artisans, potters, carpenters or to weavers to practise their traditional skills was part of reviving the rural economy. Their occupation could be adjusted to the seasonal variations of an agricultural environment. Thus, the very reaffirmation of our cultural identity had a powerful economic meaning.

There is yet another aspect of traditional crafts which underlines its importance. Many of these crafts have been practised over generations by the backward sections of society. In reviving them and creating a market, we not only enlarge the ambit of prosperity but in Bapu's words, "impart primary education through the medium of village handicrafts... as a spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences."

The handicrafts and handlooms sectors have grown significantly since Independence. I am given to understand that the handicrafts sector alone employs almost 60 lakh artisans. Its annual production has been steadily rising and its export contribution includes Rs 1,000 crore of handicrafts and Rs. 1,800 crore of carpets. The handloom sector provides, I am told, employment to 124 lakh Indians. It produces almost 6,000 million sq. metres of cloth annually. Our cotton handloom exports were Rs. 1,300 crore last year.

Impressive as they are, these figures only emphasise the untapped potential in the field. Both handicrafts and handlooms have a large domestic market, as their regional variety gives them a unique appeal. Considering that India is known for its craftsmanship, their export potential too is very significant. Taking full advantage of these opportunities requires systematic effort on the

part of bodies promoting handlooms and handicrafts. Market intelligence has to be obtained, new designs developed, upgradation of skills undertaken and infrastructure for more efficient production created. I understand that a number of programmes dedicated to this end are already under way. They cover training, design and technical development, market development and support, and exhibitions and publicity. Enhancing the competitiveness of artisans and ensuring that they are justly rewarded remains the fundamental objective of an endeavour which is an important facet of our national development.

You are all aware of the economic reform programme currently underway. Its objective is to increase our competitiveness and allow us to reap full benefit from the global economy. Upgradation of technology is an important aspect of these economic changes. Particularly in the context of handicrafts and handlooms, we must ensure that new technologies are harnessed to meet our long-standing aims of increasing both employment and productivity. Reform will gain more support if it is seen contributing to the expansion of the economy and bringing benefits to the people. We cannot afford to lose sight of the social goals of development. And even as we progress, we must constantly reaffirm our cultural identity and renew our values and traditions.

The 42 awardees receiving the National Awards today richly deserve this recognition. I extend my felicitations to all of them, as well as to the organisation, both official and non-official, who have been supportive of the preservation of our national heritage.

Equitable Distribution— A Must

It GIVES ME great pleasure to be with you all at the inauguration of the Machine Tools Exhibition IMTEX - '95. At the outset, I extend my felicitations to all the participants, and to the organizers.

Over 500 Indian companies and 100 foreign companies from 17 countries are represented at this Exhibition. Their display of the latest machine tools and equipment demonstrates the range of manufacturing technologies available in the country. IMTEX is an important forum where the specific requirements of the user industries can be evaluated. It is an Exhibition which allows our manufacturers to keep abreast of global developments while making other nations aware of our potential.

In the development of industry as a whole, machine tools have a critical role. They are necessary to create means of production. Machine tools determine the quality of our engineering industry, which represents almost 35 per cent of our total industrial production. In their growth, therefore, lies our technological advancement.

The growing sophistication of our industrial base is visible in recent years in the manufacture of Computerised Numeric Controlled Machine Tools which have higher productivity compared to conventional machine tools. Today, Computerised Numeric Controlled Machine Tools are the fastest-growing segment of this industry, and now represent 40 per cent of our total machine tools production. If productivity is one priority, adherence to and improvement of standards is another. 70 per cent of our machine tools output is now from factories certified for ISO 9000 quality system. These are foundations upon which our industry must build.

Technology has long been recognised as the basis for our national development. Our leaders, planners and institution-builders believed that science alone could solve the problems of poverty and starvation, of insanitation and of illiteracy. The application of technology to various facets of economic activity has been a national endeavour. We have seen how our agricultural productivity has gone up as a result, so that we feed today a population three times that of 1947. The creation of an industrial base with diversity and depth is an equally important achievement. So too is our development of human resources which has allowed us to build one of the world's largest reservoirs of trained manpower. These are valuable assets as we chart our future course.

Our industrial status reflects neither our capabilities nor our true potential. We rank twentieth in general production and in the manufacture of machine tools. If we are to progress, our industrial production must expand and improve. We have to uncompromisingly strive to better the quality of our products and the reliability of our

services. At the same time, our competitive edge must be constantly sharpened so that we can make the most of our comparative advantages. Much of the burden of upgrading industry rests on the machine tools manufacturers of the country.

Economic issues are today in the forefront of our national debate, which is the way it should be. Ultimately, every system is judged by its ability to meet the needs of the people. Production and distribution are the twin facets of economic thinking. Particularly in the context of our population growth, production must be continuously expanded to prevent distribution from shrinking. Even as far back as 1948, Panditji spoke of production as the first essential and declared that : “Production means wealth. If we do not produce we have not enough wealth. Distribution is equally important, so that wealth cannot accumulate in the hands of a few; nevertheless, before we think of distribution, there must be production.”

The expansion of the economy through the application of new technologies is the essence of today's economic reform. In improving the living standards of our people, we must take full advantage of all available technologies, whatever their origin. The pace of technological change has become too rapid to evaluate its benefits in terms of narrow nationalism. The importance of a vigorous participation in the global economy lies in greater exposure to evolving technologies. The challenge before our industry, particularly before the machine tools industry, is the creation and absorption of new technologies, and the ability to innovate to meet our requirements. Improvement of machine tools will lead to a more efficient industry and a more productive economy.

Even as we stress production, distribution is an aspect which cannot be neglected. The basic requirement for reforms to succeed is the full support of the populace. The common man must draw visible benefits from changes.

We cannot afford that the reforms be perceived as elitist. I am reminded once again of Panditji's address to the 1947 Industries Conference. When there is a feeling, he said, of not having a square deal, people do not put their heart and soul into the work they do. Improvement of work culture is a fundamental aspect of reforms. Providing motivation to this end by spreading the benefits of reform is therefore vital. Even as the private sector shoulders greater responsibilities, we must not lose sight of the social goals of development.

This Exhibition is a step in our quest for excellence in technology. I am confident that it would be both educative and productive. It will help in reaching new agreements, collaborations and partnerships. I extend my best wishes for the success of IMTEX-95.

Technological Progress Vital to Growth of Industry

I AM VERY happy to be with all of you today and to inaugurate the 11th Indian Engineering Trade Fair. This Fair is an occasion for leading manufacturers and users of equipment and technology to gather exhibit products and exchange experiences. It has an important place in our calendar of economic activities.

The steady growth of our engineering industry reflects the progress we have made since Independence. We are now significant producers of machinery and of a wide range of consumer goods. The diversity and depth of industry has an important bearing on the expansion of employment opportunities. The growing sophistication of engineering products and services, their contribution to our economy and their importance in our exports are signs of the maturing of our economy. Developing further in this direction is the challenge before all of us.

In our national reconstruction, Italy has been a significant external partner. Thus it is appropriate that Italy has been designated the Partner Country of this Fair. The presence here today of the President of Italy, His Excellency Dr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, signifies how much our two countries value their bilateral relationship. Italy is the third largest importer of Indian products in the European Union. It is also the 9th largest investor in the Indian economy. There are almost 900 joint ventures and collaborations between Indian and Italian companies. I believe that the Italian participation at this Fair is the biggest ever by a Partner Country.

I am confident that it will lead to intensification of commercial and technological interaction, to our mutual benefit.

The Partner State at this Fair whose infrastructure and industrial capabilities are projected is Haryana. This State has been a success story in industrial development, particularly in the engineering sector. Haryana has taken a lead in creating an industrial climate which has encouraged the inflow of investment and growth of production. It has made a special effort to attract non-resident and foreign investment. I hope that the focus at this Fair on Haryana would be of help in its endeavours towards economic progress.

This Fair has assumed special significance as 1995 is the Centenary Year of its organiser the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The CII has, during these years, established a name for itself by promotional and developmental activities. As an apex body of Indian industry, it has contributed to policy-making and significantly shaping economic thinking in the country. Its special role in the promotion of exports, in ensuring quality control and in fostering research and development has been noteworthy. I extend my felicitations to the CII on their centenary.

As a manifestation of technology, the importance of the engineering sector in our economic development cannot be overstated. It has contributed to the transformation of our economic and social life and helped to provide our people their means of livelihood. Indeed, this recognition of its role has been the basis for our national development strategy. The architect of modern industrial India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, noted : "Employment comes through newer and more effective means of wealth production. The whole experience of the past two hundred years shows that it comes with the growth of technological methods... Do not imagine that minus technological progress, we are going to deal with the problem of unemployment. We cannot... therefore, if India is to advance. India must advance in science and technology, and India must use the latest techniques..."

The absorption, creation and innovation of technologies have been at the heart of our efforts at nation-building. It is reflected in a painstaking establishment of a modern industrial base and in producing a reservoir of skilled manpower. It is only with the wider application of technology that our economy can expand, and with it, opportunities for employment. It is with better and yet better

technology that we can produce quality products in a competitive manner. The quest for improvement in the methods of production is, therefore, our priority. It is equally natural that we seek to take full advantage of technological advances, both within the country and outside. Ultimately, our goal is the creation of more national wealth, so that there is more to be distributed.

In the years after Independence, our vulnerable industry had to be protected in order that it could establish itself. Industrialisation also required scales of investment which were not always available in the private sector. We had to make special provisions for the spread of industry throughout the country, so that political integration could be consolidated with economic integration. Our industry had now come of age, and this is reflected in its capabilities and confidence. It has the strength and maturity to compete in the global arena. The ability of our private sector to shoulder responsibilities has also been steadily growing. We seek, therefore, to participate more intensively in the international economy, confident of the benefits which our comparative advantages can bring us. Naturally, stability requires that this be a calibrated exercise. But there is little doubt that judicious increase in interaction with other economies will make our own more efficient and competitive.

The need for economic reform is widely realised. In a democracy, there will inevitably be differences in approach and in priorities. But the very ethos which encourages diversity of opinions also searches for consensus. After debate and discussion, there must be a common aim for which the nation should strive unitedly. The need to progress economically is indisputable. The importance of being competitive is also appreciated by all. The benefit of an efficient economy will be felt, first of all, by the Indian consumer. The requirement to stay constantly abreast of global technological development is also evident. In this complex process, our larger purpose—to ensure that the benefits of progress reach all sections of society—must not be forgotten. It is only by evolving a national consensus that we can signal to the world our determined resolve to emerge a major economic power.

Sweeping changes in various realms of technology are taking place in the world today. India can contribute to it. We can also take advantage of it. Whether we aim at greater creativity or improved innovation, it is important that our investment in research and development increase. Our industry must take the long-term view. As beneficiaries of scientific and technical skills in the country, the engineering industry must make direct investments in

our technical institutions. This will be truly in keeping with the spirit of liberalisation.

The Engineering Fair is an occasion for a display of technologies and product ranges. But it is also an event which helps strengthen popular consciousness of the importance of science in our daily life. Its educational value in terms of broadening appreciation of the potential of contemporary technology and in inculcating a scientific temper must be noted. People from all walks of life, particularly our children, must therefore be encouraged to visit such exhibitions.

This well-organised Fair will no doubt be productive from the perspective of the engineering industry. I am confident that it will help advance our quest for technological advancement. It will also contribute to our objective of playing a more effective role in the global economy. I extend my best wishes for its success.

Rejuvenate Rural Economy

I AM VERY glad to be in your midst today for the inauguration of the twin exhibitions—AGRI-EXPO'95 and AHARA'95. AGRI-EXPO is the first comprehensive international fair on agriculture and allied sectors to be organised in our country. It is, therefore, a particularly welcome initiative, one which I am confident will grow from strength to strength in the years ahead. AHARA as the 10th biennial exhibition for food, food-processing and hotel sectors, reflects the growing importance of these industries in our national economy. I compliment the Ministry of Agriculture, the Indian Trade Promotion Organisation and other supporting organisations for their painstaking effort in organising these expositions.

Agriculture has long been recognised as the backbone of our economy. It is the source of employment for about two-thirds of our work force and accounts for one-third of our Gross Domestic Product. Agriculture exports now also constitute 15 per cent of our

total exports. Indeed, our nation's economic progress since Independence has been in large measure due to our achievements in the agricultural sector. Among our major accomplishments in the economic field is our ability today to support and feed a population almost three times that at the time of Independence. Food self-sufficiency is undeniably a critical characteristic of the resurgent Indian economy.

The rejuvenation of the rural economy after two centuries of colonial exploitation was a national priority in the reconstruction efforts of independent India. To this end, our leaders were acutely aware of the benefits which applications of science and technologies could bring to this vital sector. Pandit Nehru expressed this conviction at the Indian Science Congress in December 1937 when he stated that "It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people." It is this spirit which has guided our agricultural endeavours and is manifest at these exhibitions today.

The transformation of our villages into dynamic production centres to feed an expanding population has been a national goal. Our endeavours culminated in the Green Revolution, which saw the widespread usage of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation facilities dramatically increase our grain production. The Green Revolution and its consolidation represents not merely an important facet of our development; it is the basis for food security which strengthens our independence and sovereignty. The slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" aptly acknowledges the vital contribution made by our farmers to national self-confidence. The current economic reform and liberalisation programmes must seek to build on it.

Reform, as manifested in the agricultural sector, is focused on further harnessing science and technology to maximise production and to raise the quality of agricultural produce to international standards. This is an enormous challenge which can be met only by a combination of motivation and incentives, and education and awareness. To improve productivity and quality, use of organic fertilizers and pesticides have to become the norm. Modern water-conserving techniques must be extensively promoted and post-harvest management practices strongly encouraged. It is with growing value addition to agricultural produce that our agriculture

can assume a truly commercial character. An expanding food-processing industry indicates the extent of the transformation of hitherto traditional occupations.

Sustained encouragement to agriculture requires a positive trade and investment climate. Improvement in terms of trade of agriculture *vis-a-vis* industry will undoubtedly strengthen capital formation in this sector. The care and support required by agriculture is widely recognised. I am told that the credit structure for agriculture is currently being revamped so that wider credit access and soft loan schemes for agricultural operation can be made available. This is a commendable step which will deal with the risks inherent in agricultural operation. Schemes of crop insurance are another important measure. As commercial agriculture gains ground, it is imperative that the interests of small and marginal farmers are protected. I am also glad to be informed that the Government is aware of the need to protect the traditional rights of farmers and researchers regarding access to quality genetic material and that a comprehensive legislation on protection of plant varieties is being enacted.

Economic reforms offer considerable promise for our agriculture. The liberalised import of quality planting material and processing equipment can have a positive impact on production. The prospect of greater exports of agro-goods can boost the rural economy. The food-processing industry can benefit through better access to technologies relating to storage, preservation, packaging and distribution. The growing investment in this sector confirms a potential which must be realised.

Recent economic changes have opened up new horizons and our farmers must take full advantage of the opportunities arising as a result. Access to better technologies, in agriculture as much as in industry, can improve production and quality. If widely disseminated, it can impart a new dynamism to the rural economy. An exposure to the latest agriculture-related technologies is a must for our farmers and such exhibitions serve precisely that purpose.

The reform process is based on a recognition of the maturing of our economy. It is predicated on the assumption that greater competition is both possible and desirable. It reflects a desire to absorb new technologies and harness them to productive endeavours. It affirms our confidence in taking our rightful place in the global economy and securing the benefits of more intensive participation

in it. Reforms have generated expectations of greater efficiency, which is to the advantage of the domestic consumer.

In its implementation, we must ensure that the message of competition and efficiency is not distorted. Liberalisation must not become a licence for unchecked consumerism. It must not encourage elitism, but rather narrow disparities by creating more national wealth to be shared. Just as freedom demands responsibility, liberalisation calls for greater social sensitivity. For reforms to be successful, its benefits must reach the vulnerable sections of society. It must be realised in greater employment, in better sanitation and housing, in wholesome drinking-water facilities and in improved primary education and health facilities. In the agricultural sector, it must reach beyond the large farmer to the small and marginal ones. It is only then that a national consensus, on a matter so vital for our future, can be strengthened.

I extend my best wishes to all the participants at the twin exhibitions—AGRI-EXPO and AHARA—and to the business visitors, both from India and abroad. I hope that your endeavours would be successful and trust that the exposure and resulting awareness generated here would translate into better agricultural production and greater prosperity.

Towards Improving Global Economy

I AM GLAD to be with all of you today at the inauguration of MANTECH, the International Exhibition on manufacturing technologies, processes and products and of the India-INTECHMART, a forum for investors and technologists. These two events, important in themselves, have a heightened significance in the context of economic reform and modernization. I extend my best wishes for the success of these two exhibitions and congratulate the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Department of Industrial Development, UNIDO and other organizations which have contributed to their realisation.

Technology is the driving force of every economy. The quest for better utilisation of human labour and efficient use of natural resources is an endless one. It is, therefore, often said that the march of human history can be measured by the advancement of technology. It is also widely recognized that technology has often determined the turn which history took at critical junctures. Scientific and technological capabilities ultimately translate into economic strength and influence the standing of a nation in the international community.

India is heir to a long tradition of science and technology. It is generally accepted that agricultural technology, including crop rotation and use of implements, originated in our country. We were also pioneers in the field of metallurgy. The widening usage of iron helped profoundly shape diverse aspects of our civil life. Whether it was town-planning or irrigation, architecture or metal craftsmanship, wood work, leather work or textiles, we had established a name for ourselves.

Barely two centuries ago, much of the world's manufactured goods originated from our part of the world. We were deeply involved in maritime trade, evident in its impact on inland towns like Vijayanagar and Vidisha, Mathura and Madurai. Our importance to the global economy may be noted from the fact that the route to India was the objective of most European explorers. Technological advancements also had their intellectual accompaniment. Our contribution in the field of mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry and medicine are widely recognized. There was a flow of ideas from India to Arabia, China and to Latin Europe. When India slipped from a position of ascendancy, it was partly due to the loss of leadership in technology. Overtaken by the European Industrial Revolution, India paid a heavy price for complacency.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in analysing the past to seek lessons for our future, put it thus :

“If we look back at India’s long history, we find that our forefathers made wonderful progress whenever they looked out on the world with clear and fearless eyes and kept the windows of their minds open to give and receive When they grew narrow in outlook and shrank from outside influence, India suffered a setback.”

Our current emphasis on progress through interaction with other economies is not a new concept. In fact, we are going back to

traditions abandoned at our own cost. Whether it was the world of trade or learning, openness has always been an enriching experience. The Indian ethos is summed up by the *Rig Veda*, which states :

“आनो भद्रा : कृतवो यन्तु विश्वतः”

(Let noble ideas come from all sides.)

It was natural for us, envisaging in technology the basis of creating national wealth, to have industrialisation at the heart of our reconstruction efforts after Independence. In the five decades that have passed, we have established an industrial base with diversity and depth, where the entire spectrum of small, medium and heavy industry are well represented.

As production and employment increased, keeping abreast of new technologies has been a major challenge. The spread of technical education, the creation of research centres and a large pool of scientific manpower has enabled us to upgrade the quality of our economy. The phase of reconstruction naturally required an emphasis on protectionism and self-reliance. The very success of these strategies has strengthened our ability to compete with other economies. Our capabilities and confidence express themselves today in improving economic efficiency, in matching global standards, and in seeking more intensive participation in the world economy.

The process of reform is a complex one. One of its significant aspects is technological modernisation. Liberalisation is not merely acquisition and absorption of foreign technologies. We can no longer be satisfied with replication or imitation. If India is to progress, innovation and creativity is called for. Greater expenditure is necessary on R&D. A nation with ambitions as a global economic power cannot fulfil it when its R&D expenditure is less than even one per cent of its GNP. Development of human assets is another major challenge. It is the quality of human capital which will determine the future of our economy.

Much of the focus now is on the manner in which Government views industry. That is only half the picture. Equally important are changes in the manner in which industry views society. We all acknowledge that our private sector has matured and can shoulder more responsibilities. This must reflect in their social role. We should legitimately expect greater private involvement and invest-

ment in the infrastructure, in education, in health and in human resource development. Last year, I had the pleasure of inaugurating a School of Management at IIT Kharagpur which was made possible by a generous private donation. Such examples must proliferate if we really seek to bring about changes.

Reforming economies require a long-term view. Returns on investments cannot always be measured in immediate terms. Over the years, India has evolved its specific culture with regard to the management of its economy. It is a culture of responsible policies, thrift and a high savings rate. These must remain the basis for our future. As the economy liberalises, we must retain our sense of balance and our commitment to priorities. Consumption and non-productive expenditure must be carefully controlled. For, far from arriving at our destination, we have only embarked on the journey to prosperity.

Debates and discussions accompany change in all societies. This is particularly so in open and democratic systems. The eventual aim, however, is to evolve a consensus, on the basis of which the entire society strives unitedly. This approach, rooted in our history, is exemplified by these lines from the *Rig Veda* :

“सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्।
 देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥
 समानो मंत्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तम् एषाम्।
 समानं मन्त्रम् अभि मंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥
 समानी व आकूति : समाना हृदयानि व :
 समानम् अस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥”

(Assemble; speak with one another;
 Let your minds be of one accord.
 May your aim be common, your assembly common;
 Common the mind, and the thoughts of these united.
 A common purpose do I lay before you;
 Common be your aim, and your hearts united;
 Your mind be one so that all may happily live together.)

Economic reform and technological modernization are issues vital to shaping our future. A national consensus will signal to the world our resolve and reaffirm the irreversibility of the process of change.

Expanding our technological base is not only necessary to enlarge the ambit of prosperity but to consolidate our Independence and sovereignty. The reality is that an equitable sharing of benefits of technology remains an ideal. In areas such as atomic energy and space, discriminatory regimes persist, justified by political and commercial considerations. Pressure has only strengthened our determination to develop and reinforce national technological capabilities. By doing so, we safeguard our Independence and acquire a greater voice in shaping the world according to our ideals and principles.

As important technology expositions with direct relevance to investment and economic growth, the success of MANTECH and INTECHMART are of considerable value. I am sure that visitors to these exhibitions will get a sense of the momentous changes taking place and the message of a resurgent India.

Small-Scale Industry—A Growing Force

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you at this function “Vision 2001 — Small Industries”, organized to mark the completion of the 40th year of the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).

As the nodal national agency for the promotion and development of small scale industries, NSIC has played a sterling role in the task of national reconstruction. Small-scale industries, as you are all aware, have significantly helped to strengthen our entrepreneurial base, giving our economy its diversity and depth. It has been a major vehicle for employment generation. The 23 lakh small scale units today account for more than 1.4 crore jobs. Located in both urban and rural areas and utilising a range of technical skills, small-scale industry is a vital bridge between heavy and village industries. One of its important facets has been the industry's ability to take technology to even the remote corners of our country. By contributing to industrial dispersal, small industry has directly

strengthened our national economy and integrity. It has tapped local potential, made full use of available resources and catered to the differing requirements of our diverse nation. Indeed, its very smallness has been its strength.

The structure of small-scale industry has imparted to it a vitality and dynamism which we now recognize as its primary characteristic. I am given to understand that the small-scale sector is growing at the rate of seven per cent which is considerably higher than the rate of growth of our national economy. This is because the small-scale industry is flexible, thrifty, responsive to changing situations and reflects our social environment. It is not surprising, therefore, that its share in the national economy has been steadily growing. Equally important, its contribution to our exports has also been rising and is expected to reach 50 per cent of the total exports by the end of the century. Over the years, a consistent policy of encouraging small-scale units has yielded rich dividends. It must now strengthen our resolve to promote their further development.

In our appreciation of the growth of small-scale industry, the National Small Industries Corporation has a central place. The NSIC has directly contributed to technology development and financing, to technical training and to the supply of plants and machinery to small units. It was one of the first institutions to provide long-term financing for capital goods. It has pioneered innovative schemes like equipment leasing. The NSIC's support for the development and exploitation of markets by the small-scale sector is widely recognized as invaluable. It has provided much-needed technical support through its Prototype Development and Training Centres. Its recent launching of financial services for small-scale industry is yet another welcome step. The NSIC has been as active in exports as in the domestic market. Its philosophy — that the small-scale sector needs promotion rather than protection—has been validated over time and has acquired particular relevance in the era of economic reform.

At a time when we endeavour to reform and deregulate our national economy, the small-scale industry faces new challenges and opportunities, as does the NSIC. One of the significant aspects of economic liberalisation is technological modernisation. In an age of rapid technology advances which are revolutionising production, management and services, India cannot afford to be left behind.

Technology upgradation is the key to our ability to produce quality products in a competitive manner. But we must bear in mind that it is not possible to be satisfied only with the acquisition and absorption of technologies from abroad. Greater innovation and indigenous creativity is imperative, particularly in respect of the small-scale industry. The NSIC can play a valuable role in this regard.

As we move towards a more open economy which permits greater competition, industry can take advantage of technical and management advances in order to improve economic efficiency. It must, however, recognize that economic reform is not meant only for the producer. The consumer has an equal right to expect better products and more choice. This increase in expectation must be satisfactorily addressed by our industry in their own interest. It is only then that the support for liberalisation can be consolidated.

The challenges faced by the small-scale industry in the new economic environment are particularly significant. As we participate more intensively in the global economy, our economic activity must be reflected in the expanding quantum of our exports. For the small-scale industry, this requires an unremitting emphasis on quality, consistency and reliability. It is only when we fully meet global standards and routinely adhere to supply schedules that our products will gain the recognition that we seek.

India's economy is poised for rapid growth. The creation of national wealth has assumed a central place in our agenda through a national consensus. We now consciously endeavour to maximise facilities and minimise bottlenecks to encourage production. But, we do not envisage production *per se* as an end objective. In a society like ours, it is vital that the constantly-growing demand for employment is satisfactorily met. The small-scale sector, as the most dynamic and socially relevant facet of our economy, bears a particular responsibility in this regard. The NSIC, as the agency most closely associated with its promotion, has a significant supportive role. As we strive to realise our vision of India in 2001—as a nation with a thriving economy which utilises fully its enormous human assets—it is on the dedication and dynamism of our entrepreneurs and concerned organisations that we base our hopes. I have no doubt that together they will rise to meet the challenge.

International Trade—Quality for the Consumer

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to inaugurate today, on the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the India International Trade Fair. I extend to all the participants, particularly to those from the lands beyond, to the exhibitors, buyers and visitors, my greetings and good wishes. I hope that this Fair will help open new vistas of trade and economic cooperation and contribute to India's growing participation in the international economy.

It is appropriate that an event dedicated to bringing the fruits of technology to the people and to creating greater awareness of technology among them, should be inaugurated on the birth anniversary of a votary of science and technology like Pandit Nehru. Panditji believed that there is no visible limit to the advance of science, if it was given a chance to develop. He envisaged in the application of science and technology a solution to long-standing problems of our society. Indeed, he believed that this ancient land of ours would regain its greatness only when it joined the front ranks of technological progress. In *The Discovery of India*, Panditji wrote thus: "India has the resources as well as the intelligence, skill and capacity to advance rapidly. She has the accumulated cultural and spiritual experience of ages behind her. She can progress both in scientific theory and the applications of science and become a great industrial nation."

Panditji, as you are all aware, was the driving force behind the creation of a modern industrial base after Independence. It was his vision which was responsible for the application of modern scientific methods to transform the traditional occupation of agriculture. The modernization of our infrastructure too benefited from his ideas and energy. A number of scientific and technical institutions which are now the source of our skilled manpower came up directly under his guidance. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to state that if India can today stand on its own feet, face up to competition and enter the global economic arena, the vision and policies of Jawaharlal Nehru have made that possible.

International Fairs are an occasion for enterprises of different countries to interact with each other. The process of commercial, economic and technological cooperation can make a powerful contribution to deepening the understanding between nation and nation, culture and culture, man and man. They help us all to benefit from each other's achievements and underline the importance of interdependence to human progress. The message of global cooperation was fundamental to the outlook of Jawaharlal Nehru. Today, we all recognize that the impact of technology and common challenges which confront us call for shared endeavours. Pandit Nehru articulated this very realization 48 years ago, at the moment of India's Independence. He said : "Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments." This Fair represents that striving for progress and prosperity in the One World that is our planet.

We developing nations stand poised at an important juncture in our journey of growth. Recognizing that it is only technology which can chart a path out of poverty, we strive today to keep pace with the rapid advances which are taking place all over the world. To participate in the march of technology, to draw full benefit from it, and to be able to adapt and innovate technologies to meet our felt needs, our involvement in the global arena has to be vigorous and wholehearted. It is only by modernizing and upgrading our industry, agriculture and services sector that we can expand our economy and make it more efficient. The maturing of our economy, and particularly of our private sector, allows us now to involve ourselves more intensively in the international economy. Our vast reservoir of skilled manpower will thus have an opportunity of applying its talents in a broader framework. By bringing to bear the full weight of our comparative advantages, we can make our presence felt in the export of goods and services. A closer interaction with other societies can be a source of new ideas, concepts and techniques. The quest for technological modernization and economic competitiveness must have a central place in our national agenda. The principal beneficiary of our endeavours would be the domestic consumer, who with greater exposure, may expect a wider range of products, of better quality and at a competitive price. It is appropriate therefore, that "Quality for the Consumer" is the theme for this Fair.

The direction in which our economy is now moving requires a change in our approach to both economic and social issues.

Recognition that our products are of the highest quality, and guaranteed as such, would be the surest basis for a greater participation in the world's economy. It is essential that we realize the importance of a constant enhancement of the quality characteristics of production. There must be greater emphasis on standards and reliability. This is particularly so in respect of the small-scale sector, which represents the most dynamic part of our economy. Supply schedules must be adhered to and projects completed on time. Our work culture must improve, with benefits commensurate with contribution. Real change, however, requires more than a change in management techniques. Public policy too must keep pace with changing times. Greater investments in the social sector, particularly in literacy, education, training, health and women's welfare is called for, if the quality of our human resources is to come up to global standards.

The changes we seek to bring about affect the lives of millions. They require careful thought and considerable planning. It is vital that the national consensus on this subject be constantly strengthened. This will happen when it is widely believed that the direction of change is in the interest of society as a whole. Integrity and transparency in decision-making in the public domain will also generate greater support. There must be a broad sense of participation in these economic and social processes. India has a long history of scientific and technological achievements. We have a tradition of entrepreneurship and of foreign trade. In an earlier period, we were a powerful force in the international economy. Let us strive to reclaim that heritage.

Ensure Maximum Safety for Miners

IT IS A pleasure for me to be here today to felicitate the winners of the National Safety Awards for the mining sector. These awards are in recognition of the contributions made in enhancing standards of

safety and for promoting safety consciousness in this important sector.

From time immemorial, mining has been one of the core infrastructure activities in our economy. Our ancient hymn to the earth, *Prithvi Sukta*, recognized the mineral wealth of our planet in the following verse :

“निधि बिभ्रती बहुधा गुह्युधा गुह्य
वसु मणि हिरण्यं पृथिवी ददातु मे ।
वसूनि नो वसुदा रासमाना देवी
ददातु सुमनस्यमाना ॥”

(May this Earth,
which has the appearance of a gooddness,
which is a generous provider of wealth,
may this Earth which has manifold,
secret and unknown resources,
yield to us valuable materials,
gold, jewels and wealth.)

It stressed the importance of training, expertise and technology in extracting precious bounties from the earth, thus :

“यामन्वैच्छद्विविषा विश्वकर्मान्तरणवे
रजसि प्रविष्टाम् ।
भुजिष्यं पात्रं निहितं गुहा
यदाविर्भोगे अभवन्मातृमद्भय : ॥”

(Determined and competent persons,
using different techniques may extract
manifold materials from the inner
recesses of the Earth
— on land and from the sea.)

Chanakya, in his *Artha Shastra*, laid down detailed guidelines for the extraction of gold, silver and other precious minerals.

The Iron Pillar at Mehrauli bears testimony not only to the highly advanced level of ancient Indian metallurgical technology but also to the fact that the mining sector *per se*, was well developed by us. Unfortunately, somewhere along the march of the centuries, we lost our comparative advantages and skills which had made

India one of the most prosperous nations on earth. Our colonial experience reduced us to a status of dependence and bondage. The Industrial Revolution in the West, which was fired by coal and the steam engine, passed us by.

It is only in independent India, led by that great visionary, Pandit Nehru, that we again became masters of our own destiny. Industrial growth and the development of science and technology were among the key objectives of modern India. The mining sector assumed an integral role in our economy. Coal from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and other States, fuelled our power generation programme, spurring agricultural and industrial growth. Iron ore was vital as a raw material for our steel plants. So were a range of other minerals, including rare earths and materials in demand worldwide. Gems and other precious stones, in more recent years, have acquired an increasing weightage in our export basket. In the India of today, mining not only contributes substantially to national output but also provides significant employment opportunities for our work force. The twin challenges facing this sector are devising measures to increase productivity, which is low by international standards, and improving safety, where again there is considerable scope. Indeed, it should be recognized that enhancement of safety standards in the mining sector is a key element in the enhancement of the productivity of this sector.

Today, by honouring the Award winners present here, we focus our attention on the need to strengthen safety measures in order to protect our workers, who belong to the most productive age-group of our population.

Mining is known to be an intrinsically hazardous occupation. Workers perform their duties in dark, dingy and airless surroundings. Their health is threatened by inhalation of noxious gases and mining dust and they are also vulnerable to sudden flooding, wall collapses and explosions. There is thus a constant danger faced by every miner, particularly in underground mines.

Every year we learn with anguish about mining accidents which cause death, disability and misery to scores of individuals and families. Only recently, we were shocked to learn of a major disaster due to the flooding of a number of mines in a coal field in Dhanbad, which resulted in the loss of precious lives. It is understandable that anguish turns into anger when we find that these accidents could have been prevented even by elementary safety measures. Various

enquiry reports on mining disasters tell us that it is a combination of technological inadequacy and human error which is generally responsible for these accidents.

Our Constitution enjoins upon the State that it make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work. This was clearly stated as a fundamental right in a Resolution moved by Mahatma Gandhi at the Karachi Session of the Congress as early as 1931. This policy is now enshrined as a Directive Principle, articulated in Article 42 of our Constitution, and is particularly important for the mining sector. It is essential that no effort should be spared in developing appropriate safety standards and implementing them effectively. It is, of course, the duty of the management to ensure that necessary safety measures are in place. Similarly, it is also the responsibility of the workers to adhere to and observe all safety requirements. Awareness of personal responsibility with respect to requirements of safety and acquaintance of applicable safety procedures, should be systematically developed through training and motivational exercises.

We should also appreciate that the concept of safety has many dimensions. Of course, it involves protection against physical injury and mining-related diseases. But the concept of safety additionally includes measures for the care and protection of individuals and families who suffer the impact of accidents and disease. It needs to be borne in mind that miners receive low wages, and in the absence of any social security net, accidents resulting in injury or death, bring untold hardships on families, particularly the children. Provision of suitable insurance cover to miners is also essential.

Apart from being inherently dangerous, the mining profession also extracts a psychological cost from miners due to long periods of separation from their families. It is, therefore, essential that a provision is made to provide health, education and housing facilities to families of mine workers who are often seriously deprived of these necessities.

The need to maintain vigilance on the safety front has increased, now that the mining sector has been made more open to private and foreign investment. With the induction of modern technologies and facilities to step up productivity in this industry, we shall have to ensure that commensurate safety standards, equipment and procedures are brought in place to safeguard our workers. With our abundance of scientific and technical expertise,

we could also strengthen safety measures by developing our own innovations. The experience of workers “on the job” can be of enormous assistance in devising techniques for improving safety. I am happy that there are various fora where management and workers along with institutions involved with mining safety, discuss these issues. Today, as we recognize those who have upheld the highest standards of safety and protected our workers in the mining sector from accidents, let us pledge to improve the working environment of those who toil in this key sector, at grave and continuous risk to themselves, to build our country and take this great nation forward.

Harmony between Man and Nature

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the celebrations of 175 glorious years of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India. The history of your Society has been a saga of commitment and devotion to the cause of agriculture and horticulture. Its activities have encompassed every aspect of agri-horticulture—cultivation techniques, type and quality of seeds, introduction of new crops and, in more recent years, propagation of advanced technologies involving tissue culture, crop hybridization and multiple cropping among others.

Bengal is privileged to host several outstanding institutions of our country, including some which were set up during colonial rule. Many women and men of sterling calibre have been associated with these institutions. The founder of your Society, Rev. William Carey, was one such illustrious individual.

A many-splendoured personality, a visionary, who devoted his entire life to the public well-being, Rev. Carey’s contributions in the field of education, in languages and literature and in illuminating the lamp of Indian civilization for the world, are legendary. He was closely associated with another great institution, which has been

nourished and nurtured in the hospitable environment of Calcutta, the Asiatic Society. His enduring legacy, apart from his signal contributions to the vast corpus of knowledge and information about our culture and civilization, is the Agri-Horticultural Society, which can be rightly proud of its yeoman service to our country. I extend my cordial felicitations to all of you who are associated with this Institution.

India's ancient tradition attaches great value to the quest for harmony —particularly between man and nature. Our ethos has never been to conquer nature. It is of oneness with nature. An excerpt from *Shanti Path*, or Prayer for Peace, from the Vedas expresses our philosophy thus :

“द्यौः शान्तिर अन्तरिक्ष शान्तिः
पृथिवी शान्तिर आपः शान्तिर ओषधयः शान्तिः ।”
वनस्पतयः शान्तिर”

(Peace in the sky, peace in space, peace on earth, peace in water, peace of plants. Peace of trees.)

Our sages were aware of the importance of preservation and protection of the earth's ecological heritage, several millennia ago! Harmony with nature is a pervasive thought in the beautiful Hymn to the Earth written by Rishi Arharvan. In a verse, he says :

“असंबाधं मध्यययो मानवानां यस्या
उद्धतः प्रवतः समं बहु ।
नानावीर्या ओषधीर्या विभर्ति
पृथिवी नः प्रथतां राध्यतां नः ॥”

(May this Earth, whose surface undulates with many gradients, and sustains an abundant variety of herbs and plants of different potencies and qualities, support all human beings, in all their diversity of endowment, in mutually supportive harmony and prosperity.)

Our civilization gives to the Earth, to Nature, the supreme status of a Mother. She is the source of all nourishment and sustenance. Her soil is sacred. Nature is held in deep reverence and respect.

Prithvi Sukta states :

“यत्ते भूमे विखनामि
क्षिप्रं तदपि रोह तु।
मा ते मर्म विमृग्वरि मा
ते हृदयर्षिपम्॥”

(O' pure Earth, may that we utilize your soil well [for creative production] without causing you injury or harm and disturbing any vital element in you.)

This message is of abiding relevance, particularly in this day and age of unbridled exploitation of nature.

Fortunately, for humankind, science and technology have provided means of establishing a more harmonious relationship with nature. Through modern methods of agriculture, it has been possible to meet the requirements of society both for sustenance and for preserving the environment.

One of the most remarkable achievements of independent India is the Green Revolution, which has resulted in enhanced productivity and a dramatic increase in production of foodgrains. Today, despite the significant growth in our population, the use of high-yielding, dwarf-and-pest-resistant varieties of seeds has made India self-sufficient in foodgrains. Indeed, we have accumulated a good buffer stock and are even exporting foodgrains.

Some of you may recall that only a few decades ago the people of Bengal had suffered deeply during the terrible famine of 1943. Such a situation will never recur.

You may also remember that till the early 1960s, India was dependent on PL 480 supplies of wheat from abroad. Today, we have ensured that India will not be dependent on others for food. The nation is proud of our leaders, our scientists, our kisans and others who are responsible for this magnificent achievement.

The related areas of horticulture and floriculture, too, offer considerable potential which requires to be tapped. India is one of the largest producers of fruits and vegetables in the world. Not only is there substantial potential for increasing the yield, there is also a vast scope for processing these products. This will add value to produce and benefit our farmers. Floriculture, too, when developed in a scientific manner, can become a major source of export earnings.

I understand that some of our companies have begun exporting flowers to countries in Europe. With concerted efforts, we should be able to surpass, in quantitative as well as qualitative terms, many other countries which today are leaders in floriculture.

India is blessed with a vast diversity of agro-climatic conditions in our country which enable us to grow and support almost every type of vegetation. India is known for hundreds of varieties of fruits and flowers.

The challenge before us is to draw upon these favourable agro-climatic conditions in a concerted manner in order to develop horticulture and floriculture. Organizations such as the Agri-Horticultural Society can play an important role in achieving this objective by introducing new crops, environment-friendly cropping techniques and by providing post-harvest marketing support. I am glad that the Agri-Horti Expo is focussing on high-value horticulture, floriculture, mushroom cultivation and tissue culture among other areas.

Our research laboratories and institutions are already engaged in the task of developing new and improved varieties of fruits and vegetables. I may mention the juicy *kino*, seedless grapes and seedless papayas which have made a name for themselves. What is required today is to develop some of these products on a wider scale. The application of new technologies involving tissue culture is, therefore, of crucial importance.

Our policies of economic restructuring have provided new opportunities for the growth of the food-processing sector, including horticulture and floriculture. Investment is increasing in this priority area. However, it needs to be ensured that infrastructural bottlenecks particularly in our rural areas, are removed.

In addition, it is important to adopt efficient marketing techniques. Just as Darjeeling Tea has an enviable worldwide reputation for its aroma and flavour, we should strive for developing a similar reputation for other products.

The Agri-Horticultural Society continues to play an important role in disseminating information about new technologies and opportunities in the fields of horticulture and floriculture, particularly in this region. Through the Carey Institute, your Society is already engaged in imparting scientific knowledge and training to students. Your efforts should be strengthened and enhanced with the support of the private sector.

The Flower Shows organized by your Society, are a significant aspect of its work and contribute to the cultural life of the people. They offer moments of joy and pleasure to the large number of visitors who are provided an opportunity to experience the beauty and glory of nature in its myriad hues.

I am happy to note that this Trade Fair has been organised jointly by the Agri-Horticultural Society and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It provides a valuable opportunity to farmers, companies, academic and research institutions and others to come together on a common platform. It will facilitate the exchange of ideas and information, forge partnerships and joint ventures for mutual benefit and for the prosperity of our country.

We should encourage the holding of such events more frequently, particularly in our rural areas, in order to promote and encourage participation by our kisans and panchayats.

With these words I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Agri-Horti Expo 1996. It is my hope and expectation that your Society will strengthen its efforts in developing these sectors in the years to come. It is my wish that by the time you celebrate your bi-centenary, India would have become a society much closer to achieving its objectives of peace and prosperity and, above all, of harmony, in all its different dimensions.

Postal Service, a Humane Social Service

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to participate in the ceremony for the presentation of the Meghdoot Awards for excellence in postal services. The significance of this function has been enhanced by the release of a set of special postage stamps on Indian miniature paintings, depicting the colour and music of the seasons, "Ritu Rang".

For me personally, the joy is all the greater since, as Minister of Communications several years ago, I obtained an insight into the commendable work and high standards of performance of all the staff and employees of this Department.

Your awards have been appositely named after the magnificent messenger of Mahakavi Kalidasa's classic work, *Meghdoot*. It was the Cloud which was supposed to carry forth the sentiments of yearning and longing, and the message of love of the exiled Yaksha for his beloved. He was devoted to his duty even though it involved traversing difficult paths and terrains.

In some memorable verses, Kalidasa's Yaksha hails the Cloud thus :

“संतप्तानां त्वमसि शरणं तत्पयोद प्रियाया :
सन्देशं मे हर धनपतिक्रोधविल्लेषितस्य ।
गन्तव्या ते वसतिरलका नाम यक्षेश्वराणां
बाह्योद्यानस्थितहरशिरश्चन्द्रिकाधौतहर्म्या ॥”

(O Donor of rains, a refuge of the heated! The God of Wealth has angrily banished me. Please carry my message to my beloved in the city of Alka, where the numerous palaces of mighty Yakshas are illumined by the white Moon, gracing Siva's forehead, in the surrounding gardens.)

If we are to draw any message from *Meghdoot*, it is one of the pursuit of excellence in the performance of one's duty, notwithstanding difficulties and obstacles which may be encountered. This is an inspiring message worthy of emulation by us all.

I am glad that dedicated individuals are being honoured for their outstanding performance in diverse areas of postal activity. The late Sujat Ali went beyond the call of duty and sacrificed his life in the service of our people. I pay my homage to his memory. I also extend my warm congratulations and felicitations to each awardee. We recognize today their spirit of service to society and commitment to their professional duties. Their example should serve as a source of inspiration to others in this avocation.

As with other service industries, many of us tend to take the postal service for granted. Few realize the immense effort and hard work and the vast array of activities which go into the delivery of the humble postcard. The collection and sorting of mail, the variety of transport used and the delivery of *dak* require detailed and

meticulous planning and perfect execution of every step in a long chain of tasks. In a country of India's size, with its vast population, vast distances and diverse terrain and climatic conditions, the management of an efficient mail delivery system is truly a task of stupendous magnitude. It is to the credit of the individuals involved that India has developed one of the most comprehensive, efficient and widespread postal networks in the world. Though this system in its modern form developed and expanded after the late 18th century, its origins go back several centuries to the time of Mohammed Bin Tughlaq. The itinerant traveller, Ibn Battuta, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for his magnificent narrations of the life and times of 14th century India, described the postal system in his *Travels in Asia and Africa* thus : "From Sind to the city of Dihli (Delhi), the Sultan's capital, it is 50 days' march, but when the intelligence officers write to the Sultan from Sind, the letter reaches him in 5 days by postal service." He then went on to elaborate in splendid detail, the two kinds of postal services in India—mounted couriers on horse-back and couriers on foot, "each of whom has a rod-a-yard-and-a-half long with brass bells at the top", which announce his arrival. He observed that the foot couriers provided faster service than the mounted post. The reference to the man with a rod with bells, i.e., the *Hakia*, is something which I distinctly remember from my own youth.

After Independence, our postal network has grown by leaps and bounds. Today, I am told, India has over 1,50,000 post offices, as compared to about 23,000 at Independence. Our postal service handles over 3,500 million articles of mail each year. This is a remarkable achievement.

Just as Meghdoot provided the link between the Yaksha and his beloved, the postman plays a crucial role in the transmittal of all communications, between parents and children and families and friends. He is regarded as a friend and guide, particularly in our villages. He reads out letters aloud and even assists in the preparation of replies. The postman plays an integral role in rural society.

Despite the growth of facilities in the form of telephones, telefax, satellite communications and computerized E-mail among others, the postal network remains the most vital link for the majority of our people. Letters are often the only link between individuals separated by distances. They are the harbingers of urgent tidings including those relating to interviews and employ-

ment offers, which are awaited with keen anticipation, particularly by our youth. The regular delivery of money orders from children are often a significant means of sustenance for aged parents. These are some of the reasons which make the postal service a humane social service. It plays a crucial role, specially in our rural areas where other means of communications are not easily available. It, therefore, becomes essential not only to enhance the reach of the postal network but also to make delivery schedules tighter and customer-service more prompt, friendly and pleasant. Indeed, it is our responsibility to provide cheap, efficient and timely communications facilities to our people.

I am glad to learn that several important initiatives including automatic processing of mail, satellite money transfers, all-purpose counter machines and computerization of postal processes and procedures are being adopted throughout the country to provide better service. I am told that cleanliness drives have enhanced the appearance and ambience of many of our post offices.

I am happy to observe that today when we honour the pursuit of excellence in your Department, you are in turn paying tribute to the excellence of India's cultural ethos and traditions, through the release of an exquisite set of postage stamps depicting Indian miniatures.

Miniature paintings emerged into a full-fledged art form expressing the beauty of nature, the joys and sorrows of daily life, our festivals and customs, among a variety of themes and motifs. It evolved and developed in diverse ways throughout our country and particularly in Rajasthan, Kangra and the Deccan. The unique arrangement of figures in Rajasthani paintings, the soft and pleasing colours of the Kangra school and the technical perfection of Deccani miniatures have contributed immensely to this beautiful art. Indeed, each region provided its unique touch of ornamentation, thematic representation and style, hues and colours to make miniature painting a truly magnificent part of our artistic heritage.

This pictorial tribute to the four seasons represents a synthesis of poetry, music, painting and nature as a composite whole. It brings to mind Kalidasa's songs of Vasanta, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad, Hemant and Shishir Ritus. Since we are in the midst of Spring, I would like to quote a pleasing verse from *Ritusamhara*, which conveys the joy of this season :

“मलयपवनविद्ध कोकिलालापम्य :

सुरभिमधुनिषेकाल्लब्धगन्धप्रबन्धः ।
 विविधमधुपयू थैर्वैष्ट यमानः समन्ता-
 भवतु तव वसन्तः श्रेष्ठकालः सुखाय ॥”

(May the excellent Spring season grant you happiness — the Spring which is full of breezes from the Malaya mountain, which is charming with the sweet notes of the *kokila*, which is continually fragrant by the dripping of odorous honey and which is surrounded on all sides by the numerous swarms of bees.)

Your Department needs to be commended for its propagation of Indian art and culture by means of these special postage stamps. I hope these stamps and first-day covers will be available throughout the country. In addition to creating greater awareness about our cultural traditions, I am sure you will continue your efforts to inform people about our freedom struggle and the glorious sacrifices made by our national leaders for the cause of human dignity, equality and Independence.

With these words I would once again like to congratulate all award-winners and indeed the entire Postal Department, and urge them to continue their important efforts in the service of our people.

Small-Scale Sector—Engine of Growth in National Economy

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with this ceremony for the presentation of national awards to outstanding small scale entrepreneurs. The nation honours them for the high standards of excellence and competitiveness that they have achieved and for their contributions to our economic growth and development.

Today, when we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our Independence, we can take pride in the great advances India has made in diverse spheres of national endeavour. Tangible progress has been

secured in improving the quality of lives of our people. Self-sufficiency in agriculture, a diversified industrial base and the development of a vast pool of highly technically-trained manpower provide us a strong foundation on which to build for the future.

The small-scale sector represents one of the fastest-growing segments of our economy. Its contributions to national output and to exports have imparted strength and resilience to our economy. Small-scale industries have emerged as a major avenue for employment. I am told that three million small-scale units employ about 15 million people and produce almost 35 per cent of our industrial output. I compliment the dynamic and far-sighted entrepreneurs who have made all this possible.

The challenge before our industry, including the small-scale sector is to ensure that our goods retain their competitive edge, both in terms of quality and price; that our products withstand competition from cheaper substitutes and imitations; and, that they adapt to suit changing market requirements and demand. The upgradation of technology and of traditional skills, the use of modern designs and packaging are some of the factors we should focus upon in order to maintain and enhance competitiveness. Already, our textiles and other products are facing protectionist barriers in developed country markets. These range from the social clause to environmental conditionalities. We must be ever watchful against such developments. Indeed, we should take the lead in safeguarding our commercial interests.

An area in which I believe small-scale industries have immense scope is food-processing. I am told that though India is one of the largest producers of fruit and vegetables in the world, we process only a small fraction of our total produce. The development of the agro-processing industry is essential as it would ensure that the fruits of economic reform are taken to the less privileged sections of our society, particularly in rural areas and lead to a reduction in urban-rural disparities.

As we prepare to step into the next century, it is important to bear in mind the current trends and developments in the global economy which impinge on our own efforts for national reconstruction and development. Under the auspices of World Trade Organization, new and more liberal rules governing international trade have been accepted by the international community. A reduction in tariffs and a phasing out of quantitative restrictions on trade have

become inescapable realities. It is imperative that we examine and comprehend the full implications of these global developments on our own domestic economic processes and sectors. No sector, whether it is large, medium or small industry can remain unaffected by these developments. Our efforts should be to equip ourselves, indeed, position ourselves, strategically in a manner that enables us to take full advantage of these developments and minimize any adverse fall-out. The policy framework which we devise for the growth and development of our small-scale sector must show in these global realities. Small-scale industry associations have a crucial role to play in this process.

The enterprises which have received the National Awards today have demonstrated that with determination, vision and hard work, our small-scale sector can become the engine of growth in our economy. I congratulate all award-winners and wish them success in their endeavours. May their example be a source of inspiration to others. I wish that every small enterprise, which is like a tender sapling, matures over time into a resilient and dynamic unit. In this way, let us strive to make our country strong, prosperous and great.

III
HEALTH AND
SOCIAL WELFARE

AIDS : A National Health Concern

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you at the inauguration of the International Conference on AIDS, Drugs and Alcohol. This Conference will discuss these major challenges to the health of our societies, challenges which have the potential to disrupt the social fabric. Understanding the inter-relationship between AIDS, Drugs and Alcohol is the key to our efforts to address problems associated with them.

AIDS emerged as a serious national health concern in India following the first detection of a case in 1986. HIV infection has since been reported from 23 States and Union Territories of the country. I understand that more than 17,000 HIV-positive cases have come to light. The enormity of the threat posed by AIDS is becoming increasingly apparent. So too is the necessity for a comprehensive response.

The spread of AIDS in our country, you are all aware, has not been uniform. States like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have exhibited a pattern of sexual transmission while the North Eastern States have seen the infection spread through drug abuse. I am told that almost half the HIV-positive cases in the North-East are of intravenous drug-users. That AIDS has primarily affected the economically productive age group is a matter of particular concern, as it has serious implications for the future of our society.

In every society there are high risk behaviour groups who are especially vulnerable to AIDS. Through them HIV infection enters the general population. Our efforts at combating AIDS therefore has to specially target these groups, even while creating greater awareness in the general population. Given the social and geographical distribution of the high-risk group, it is possible to prioritize interventions. This has been the basis for the National AIDS Control Programme, set up to arrest the spread of this infection and to reduce resulting mortalities.

Monitoring trends in the spread of HIV infection has been the first priority. This helps design, plan and suitably introduce

interventions. Blood Safety Programme is another notable aspect of our control efforts. It is well known that the transfusion of infected blood can be the method of transmission of HIV. The expansion of blood-testing facilities is therefore very important. Treatment of sexually-transmitted diseases and promotion of contraceptives will also have a major bearing on the spread of HIV. But ultimately AIDS has to be approached as a social problem which can only be checked by the cooperation of an educated society.

The abuse of drugs and alcohol is a problem of longer standing, but no less the serious for that. Traditional drugs like opium and cannabis have been prevalent in our society for long. Tobacco and alcohol abuse has also been on the increase in the last few decades. The introduction of synthetic and psychotropic substances in the 1980s has added a qualitatively different dimension to the problem. The intravenous use of drugs has also risen. This has led to growing public concern over the abuse of drugs and an intensification in efforts to combat the problem.

Our endeavours to check drug abuse hinges both on the control of supplies and reduction of the demand. The control and interception of supply of narcotics has high priority in the field of law and order. But control itself will have little success unless the demand for drugs can be reduced. This can only take place with the generation of awareness on the ill effects of drugs, by treating and counselling drug addicts, and by undertaking preventive measures against drug abuse.

Alcohol abuse is even more widespread than that of drugs. It is a problem more deeply rooted in history and tradition as well. While the hazards of alcohol addiction are well known, its contribution to high-risk behaviour makes it a significant factor in the context of AIDS.

These health concerns reflect the stresses and strains of our societies resulting from urbanization, alienation and changes in life-style. These are as much medical challenges as they are sociological problems. A multi-sectored approach to them is therefore necessary. Prevention, as always, is better than cure. Publicity and educational efforts highlighting the dangers of indiscriminate sex and alcohol and drug abuse must be stepped up.

Our social reform movements have long focused on promoting temperance. They also sought to discourage narcotics abuse. With

AIDS, the consequences of sexual excesses have been dramatised. The message of morality and personal stability needs to be highlighted. Bapu who did so much to build consciousness on these aspects of life aptly said : "A pure character is the foundation of health in the real sense of the term". This the youth of our nation should learn, absorb and practise.

I am very glad that experts in different fields connected with AIDS, alcohol and drugs have gathered here. These are global problems needing global cooperation and solutions. I commend the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, the Scottish Council on Alcohol, the Addictions Forum and all others involved for recognising and addressing these vital issues of our times.

Rajiv Gandhi himself was a vigorous advocate of improving national health. He believed in the inevitability of change and had the vision to address problems associated with it. He was a votary of educated public opinion and a believer in socially conscious youth. It is fitting that the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has chosen to highlight problems of the contemporary era on Rajivji's 50th birth anniversary.

I wish this Conference all success and I am confident that its deliberations will be productive.

Give Every Child a Better Future

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today to give away the National Awards for Child Welfare for 1994. Ensuring a better future for our children is one of our basic and fundamental concerns. It includes improving their chances of survival, ensuring their better health, providing them necessities for their growth, and creating a climate for their development as productive and responsible members of society. Today, we recognise and honour those who have contributed to making all these possible. I extend my felicitations to the recipients of these prestigious awards and

convey, on behalf of the nation, our appreciation of their tireless endeavours.

Whether we examine the state of children from a global perspective or from a national one, the progress made in recent years has been a source of encouragement. Dramatic strides have taken place in the levels of immunization. We have become aware of the dangers of vitamin 'A' and iodine deficiency and have evolved programmes to prevent blindness and cretinism. Oral rehydration therapy has begun to check one of the largest causes for child deaths : diarrhoea. The threat from measles and polio, tetanus and diphtheria has been greatly reduced. By doing so, we have ensured the survivability of the children of India to a degree which could not have been imagined before Independence.

While taking note of this progress, we must be clear that there is no room for complacency. Our standards of public hygiene and sanitation leave much to be desired. Until these are remedied, the environment for diseases remains. Malnutrition is a major factor for the poor health of our children, as indeed of adults. Thus, even as we spread the message of breast-feeding, our efforts are limited by the reality that the mother herself may not be adequately nourished. Family planning is yielding results but we still have a long way to go. Until there are less pregnancies and longer intervals, our babies will remain underweight. Anaemic mothers do not produce healthy children. In the final analysis, poverty and population are the two overriding factors which will determine the welfare of our children. They must be effectively addressed if we seek to achieve improvement in the way our children live.

The physical growth of children is admittedly vital. But providing an environment for their overall development is almost as important. The importance of education to child welfare is universally recognized. This is not limited to formal education provided by schools but encompasses literacy as a whole. For literacy is accompanied by awareness which is the basis for development. An educated child has a greater possibility of expressing its talent and realising the potential. Educated parents have a better knowledge base to care for their children, and in turn, educate them. Ours is a complex society with an enormous range of problems. Solutions are equally complex but it is evident that universal education is a critical ingredient.

In discussing the welfare of children, we must acknowledge that the girl child deserves special attention. All available social and demographic data emphasise the extent of past discrimination. Girls remain the first victim of any scarcity in a family. They are denied fair access to education, health and employment. Our progress is dependent on the realisation that India cannot advance while neglecting half its population. A continued and unrelenting focus on this issue is necessary to bring about fundamental changes in social attitudes.

Development has brought with it its own problems where children are concerned. The prevalence of child labour and the growth of street children in urban areas are significant challenges before us. They may reflect the compulsions of poverty but are repugnant to anyone with a conscience. Ensuring the welfare of these children is a major responsibility for both State and the society, which we can no longer shirk.

Particularly in the last two decades, there has been a welcome improvement in our sensitivity to the status and welfare of children. In India, the commitment to ensure their well being is included in the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution. In 1974, we formulated a National Policy on Children and introduced in 1975, the Integrated Child Development Services Programme. The 1990 World Summit for Children represented a watershed in global endeavours to shape the future through investment in children. We unhesitatingly embraced its essential goals and brought out a National Plan of Action for Children for its realisation. The National Policy on Nutrition and the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme represent our commitment to this important cause.

These programmes and policies underline the responsibility which the State bears in respect of child welfare and development. But ultimately, the success of a social cause depends on society itself. It is therefore vital that voluntary organisations and concerned individuals give a lead to the community by generating awareness. Social workers and organisations can play a valuable role in recognising problems faced by society, and through experience, help in the search for solutions. The Awards presented today underline the value we attach to their efforts.

It is not uncommon, when searching for solutions, to seek models to emulate. In the case of child welfare, we do not have to

look very far. The State of Kerala is a notable example of a society with low infant mortality, high life expectancy, literate women, good nutrition and successful family planning. This has been recognised and appreciated by UNICEF in its report on "The state of the world Children — 1995". If this can be achieved by the people of Kerala, it is not beyond the reach of the rest of India.

The World Declaration on the Development of Children stated that : "There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future." Let us strive to do so in India.

Global Cooperation Essential for Human Progress

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you today at this international gathering of eminent persons deliberating on questions related to safety, health and environment. I extend my good wishes to the delegates and organizers and hope that this conference would be productive.

Today, safety, health and environmental issues have become a matter of serious concern for all societies which no country can afford to disregard in the process of development. As industry has evolved, significant advances have been made in overcoming many of the challenges to the safety, health and well being of the working people. Yet, it is estimated by the International Labour Organization that some 200,000 work-related deaths occur each year all over the world. In addition, a large number of workers are victims of work-related accidents and occupational diseases. Estimates also indicate that the economic consequences of accidents and diseases at work represent at least one per cent of the GNP of our nations. It is necessary, therefore, that safety, health and environmental consciousness become intrinsic to our thinking and development process. Preventing or minimizing accidents, ill-health and pollution, avoiding wastage and conserving non-renewable resources must become both personal and public goals.

The global consensus on development and environmental cooperation is reflected in 'Agenda-21' adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protection and management of the eco-system and a safer and prosperous future are achievable only by integrating environment and development concerns. No nation can achieve these on its own, and we have come to recognize that global cooperation and partnership are essential for human progress.

The Asia Pacific Region has an important place in the quest for global prosperity. Spread over two continents, this region supports over half the world's population and comprises countries with diverse political systems at different stages of development. It is today the fastest-growing region in the world economy, one whose industrial development requires greater attention to safety concerns. The Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization (APOSHO) provides an important avenue for cooperation in the region. Though founded only a decade ago, it has steadily expanded to include 20 countries in the region. This very conference reflects the role of APOSHO in generating greater awareness on issues vital to our times.

As a humanistic society, India envisages the safety and health of its workers and the protection of its environment in a comprehensive context. At the session of the Indian National Congress, at Karachi, on 29 March 1931, a resolution on fundamental rights was adopted, having been moved by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Among the fundamental rights articulated therein were: ". . . 3. A living wage for industrial workers, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work. 4. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom. 5. Protection of women workers and specially adequate provisions for leave during maternity period. 6. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories."

The Constitution of India has incorporated in its several principles to be followed by the State in regard to conditions of work and environment. One of the Directive principles lays down that the State direct its policy towards protecting the health and strength of workers men and women, and ensuring that the tender age of children is not abused. It is also directed that just and humane conditions of work are secured for women. There are also provisions that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve

the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. On their part, it is the duty of citizens to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and to have compassion for living creatures.

The first Factories Act was enacted in India as early as 1881, to protect the workers from physical and health hazards. Its latest amendment was carried out in 1987 defining 'hazardous process' and prescribing special safety and health measures for 'hazardous process' industry. In 1986, the Environment Protection Act was adopted in line with legislation elsewhere in the world. In 1991, the Public Liability Insurance Act was brought on the statute book, to provide for mandatory public liability insurance by installations handling hazardous substances. In 1995, the Environment Tribunal Act was passed, setting up a National Environmental Tribunal with branches in different parts of the country to provide relief and compensation to victims of accidents while handling hazardous substances and for causing environmental damages. Central and State Governments have inspection agencies to oversee the implementation of these and other related statutes.

The Judiciary plays a key role in upholding and interpreting these laws and thus providing new directions in safety, health and environmental matters. We in India have witnessed important judgements in this regard, among them the establishment, by the Supreme Court in 1986, of the principle of absolute liability, on the part of the management of hazardous installations, to compensate those affected by accidents arising out of their activities. The closure of highly polluting tannery units discharging effluents into the Ganges river was also a notable step. The right to health and medical aid to protect the health and vigour of workers while in service or post-retirement is now deemed as fundamental by our Courts. No doubt, other countries in the region too have their own experiences to report on, and share, at this Conference.

Progress in improving safety, health and environment cannot, however, be achieved only through legislation. Education and training, information compilation and dissemination, development of innovative approaches and community participation, all have a key role to play in this process. A cooperative approach, involving the Government at various levels, industry, workers, non-governmental organisations, citizens, groups and community must form the basis of our efforts.

Major accidents involving hazardous chemicals have shown an increase in many countries of the region. They can involve both fixed installations and transportation of chemicals. Their potential to cause extensive loss of human life and damage to the environment demands that special attention be paid to the prevention and management of such accidents. In India, after the Bhopal gas tragedy, a number of legislative, administrative and technical measures have been taken in this direction. A system of Major Accident Hazard Control has also been set up in the country with the technical cooperation of the ILO. Many other countries must also have taken similar steps. However, the need for continued vigilance and upgrading of the system cannot be over emphasized. Regional cooperation is essential as such accidents can have consequences beyond national boundaries.

The interdependence of economies is today reflected in the transfer of certain types of technology from the developed to developing countries. New technologies can contribute to improving safety. On the other hand, these many introduce new occupational risks. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that full safeguards, as applicable in developed nations are made assessable to the developing world also. To this end, exchange of information on risks and their management must be encouraged.

The agenda before you is broad-based and covers a large number of areas and occupational hazards. The success of this Conference will depend on the coming together of the various professions participating in it. Full benefit of the knowledge of the wide spectrum of experts present here must be taken in your endeavour to build a more safe and secure world. I wish your deliberations every success.

Service to Humanity — A Fundamental Truth

WE HAVE ALL gathered here today to celebrate the 70th Birthday of revered Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This is indeed a special

At the inauguration of the Sri Sathya Sai drinking water project, Puttaparthi, 23 November 1995

occasion, made even more noteworthy by the realization of an extraordinary example of Baba's philosophy of service to humanity. On behalf of all of you, I would like to wish Baba many more years of gracing humankind with his presence and with his blessings.

Service to humanity represents the essence of Baba's unifying philosophy. It reflects the fundamental truth which has been articulated by all the great religions over the ages : that man is one, whatever be his or her external form. It is this premise which surmounts the apparent distinctions of caste, creed, race or religion. Concern for all beings naturally leads to special attention to those who are in great need of assistance. Therefore, it has been the message of all faiths and beliefs that the noblest action, one which represents the path of salvation, is to provide relief and succour to the less fortunate of our brethren.

Concern for humanity and the desire to alleviate suffering has always been held out as an exemplary thought and action for individuals and society alike. Indeed, our traditions envisage giving as a moral duty on the part of those who have, to those who do not. Serving the poor, needy and afflicted was regarded as the most righteous course. Dharmaraja Yudhisthara's words exemplify this humanistic outlook :

“न त्वहं कामये राज्यं, न स्वर्गनापुनर्भवम्।
कामये दुः खतप्तानां प्राणिनां आर्तिनाशनम्॥”

(I have no desire for kingdoms nor for heaven, nor do I desire rebirth. I only yearn to relieve the suffering of the living.)

True devotion is expressed not by mere words or by rituals, but by concrete action in serving our fellow-beings. As it has been said in the *Karna Parva*, religion is that deed which ensures the welfare of others and harms none :

“अहिंसार्थाय भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम्।
यः स्यादहिंसा संयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥”

Similarly, the *Dhammapada* underlines the importance of good deeds in a righteous life thus : “As from a large heap of flowers many garlands and wreaths can be made, so by a mortal in this life, there is much good work to be done.”

In the Holy Bible, it will be recalled that Lord Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount exhorted that : “In the service of my people

do thou serve me." This service was envisaged not as an act of compulsion, but as reflecting the intrinsic goodness which is in all of us. St. Paul the Apostle in his second Epistle to the Corinthians says : "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

The essential oneness underlying the apparently diverse systems of faith is in the fact that they are all anchored on the sense of service. This conviction also finds expression in the verses of the Holy Quran. In the *Surah-al-Anbia*, it is said : "Men have divided themselves into factions, but to Us they shall all return. He that does good works in the fullness of his faith, his endeavours shall not be lost. We record them all."

These lines of Narsi Mehta in a Bhajan, of which Bapu was so fond, denote what must be our approach towards serving others:

“वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिए जे पीड़ पराई जाणे रे।
परदुःखे उपकार करे तोये, मन अभिमान न आणे रे॥”

(Know them as true servants of God who sympathize with the sufferings of others. They give succour to those in suffering, and do so without vanity.) Sant Tukaram voiced exactly the same perception :

“जे का रंजलेले गांजलेले
त्यासि जो म्हणें आपुले।
देव तेथे जाणावा
साधु तेथे ओकखावा॥”

(Those who are suffering and in misery, down-trodden and in pain, [He] Who identifies with them, Realize divinity as existing there, Recognize wisdom therein.)

Today, we see before us testimony of what can be achieved by commitment to service, and dedication to the peoples' welfare. A year ago, Baba had referred to the acute water shortage in Anantapur district, which is a chronically drought prone area of the State. In providing relief, he was veritably giving a gift of life, for without water, there can be no existence. Quenching the thirst

of a people is an act unsurpassed in its nobility. Even in our ancient texts like the *Yajur Veda*, it finds expression in this prayer :

“तात्मानं मे तर्पयत प्रजां मे तर्पयत ।
पशून् मे तर्पयत गणान् मे तर्पयत
गणा मे मा वितृषन् ॥”

(Satisfy my soul, satisfy my progeny, satisfy my herds, satisfy my people, let not my people thirst.

The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust rose magnificently to meet the challenge of Baba's call. With His blessings, a monumental endeavour was undertaken to provide water to 802 villages in a district covering more than 19,000 sq. kms. and a population of 3.5 million. The enormity of the task was only matched by the speed and efficiency with which the Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project was executed. The entire Anantapur district now has access to drinking water. I congratulate all those who, inspired by Baba, have given their time and effort to realize this dream. The welfare of the people is their reward and fulfilment. One example is worth a thousand words, and the success of this project must encourage others dedicated to the well-being of our masses. As such endeavours draw on the skills, resources and capabilities of those who wish to serve, they address the needs of the people in a timely, efficient and appropriate manner. This spirit of self-help and voluntary work was a major aspect of our freedom struggle. It is critical for our self-respect and for the building of our confidence. We need not look to Government for a solution to those problems which we can solve by ourselves. Undoubtedly, the Government has its responsibilities to discharge, particularly so in our social sector. But where individuals and organizations can pool together their intellectual and material resources and address specific concerns, they must be encouraged to do so. Today, we have embarked on policies which call for more intensive development, require greater competitiveness and reflect a larger role for ourselves. Our aspirations can only be realized when we summon the inner strength of the people to address their felt needs. Involving the masses in our quest for progress is vital for the success of our endeavours. Non-governmental organizations, in touch with people's interests and concerns, can make an increasing contribution to our national development and growth. In this Drinking Water Supply Project, we have before us an example worth emulating.

May Baba's blessings be showered on all. May His spiritual light always guide us on the true path—the path of service to humanity—which alone can bring some meaning to our lives.

Succour to the Disabled

I AM VERY happy to be present here today when we observe the International Day of the Disabled Persons. It is fitting that on this day, the nation recognizes the outstanding achievements of individuals with special abilities, and honours their striving for excellence. In honouring them, we salute the triumph of the human spirit.

I extend my warmest congratulations to the winners of the National Awards for the Welfare of the Handicapped. I would like to felicitate all categories of awardees, and especially those, who by dint of sheer hard work, perseverance and courage, have demonstrated that all difficulties and challenges can be overcome.

Today, we focus the nation's attention on the achievements of the disabled and the handicapped. As I look around, I see persons with special abilities who have reached the pinnacle of success and excellence. They are the high achievers in their respective fields. I see in this hall, confident and productive citizens of India who have toiled against all odds. I see individuals who have extracted the best out of very difficult circumstances. They have demonstrated that it is the spirit that matters and it is the mind, the soul, the power within, that is of paramount importance.

India has a tradition of honouring excellence and special abilities. We have the great legacy of Surdas who brought light into the lives of millions of people. When we read his glorious poetry, who can recall that he was in any way disabled. To us, he was a very gifted individual who had a deep insight into our spiritual life and who had transcended earthly difficulties to arrive at the eternal truth. He reflected the ability of the will to overcome physical inadequacies, in the following verse :

“जाकी कृपा पंगु गिरि लंघै, अंधे कौं सब कुछ दरसाई।
बहिरो सुनै, गूंग पुनि बोलै, रंक चलै सिर छत्र धराई।”

(With God's grace, the disabled can climb mountains, the blind can see, the deaf can hear, the mute can speak, and a pauper can be a prince.)

A similar sentiment was expressed by Goswami Tulsidasji in the following couplet from the *Ramcharitmanas* :

“मूक होइ बाचाल पंगु चढ़ै गिरिवर गहन।
जासु कृपा सो दयाल द्रवौ सकल कलि मल दहन॥”

In contemporary times, we draw inspiration from the courage and tenacity displayed by some of our fellow Indians who have surmounted their physical handicaps to achieve eminence in diverse fields such as literature, art, music, dance, sports and public life. The names of Ved Mehta, Satish Gujaral, Ravindra Jain, Sudha Chandran, Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia, B.S. Chandrashekhar and Professor Nigam and Sadhan Gupta, come to mind.

It is in accordance with this spirit and tradition, that we recognize the outstanding achievements of persons with special abilities and of those who work with them. The awards are a testimony to the fact that persons with disabilities can and should attain their rightful place in society. They must have faith and self-confidence in themselves. They have a valuable contribution to make to our national life.

In India, I am informed, almost two per cent of our population suffers from physical disability. If we include those with mental disabilities as well, the numbers become much larger. It, therefore, becomes vital to address the entire gamut of issues, ranging from measures required to prevent disability, to those relating to treatment for the disabled and their rehabilitation, through the provision of training and productive employment. Improved nutrition, particularly of women, and family planning, together with a wider availability of health facilities, and awareness of health requirements, will go a long way in limiting disability at birth. The immunization programme of the Government, particularly against polio, has saved millions of children from physical disability. Similarly, propagating the use of vitamin 'A' will be effective in reducing visual impairment. It is, therefore, essential to appreciate the importance of immunization in preventing disability.

Advances in modern technology have enabled us to address problems associated with disabilities far more effectively than in the past. A notable example is the development and manufacture of artificial limbs, aids and appliances, which allow the handicapped to lead a normal life. The "Jaipur Foot", developed by Dr. P.K. Sethi, for instance, has won acclaim even internationally. Such facilities will encourage the disabled to come forward, engender self-confidence in them, and enable them to participate in an integral manner, in our productive processes. Only then can we ensure that their talents are not lost to society, and that they contribute in full measure to national reconstruction.

We can learn from the developments in several countries abroad where there is much greater awareness of the specific

needs and requirements of the disabled, which would enable them to lead a full life. For instance, in several countries ramps are constructed to facilitate wheel-chair access to buildings; public buses are equipped with steps which can reach down to street level to help the handicapped; lifts have floor numbers written in braille and toilets in many buildings are reconfigured to meet the requirements of the physically disabled. All these innovations assist in minimizing the dependence of the disabled on others and enable them to lead independent lives.

In India too, we can harness such technologies and adapt them to suit our own circumstances. We can utilize the availability of modern computer—related facilities, in which India has a comparative advantage, to develop our own innovations. We have a wealth of scientific and technical manpower, which together with support from the Government, the private sector and grassroots—level organizations, can contribute to this end.

Rehabilitation efforts in respect of the disabled can be successful only when we involve all sections of society. The Government, through its programmes and schemes, is undertaking significant efforts to provide rehabilitation services, education and vocational training and employment opportunities. This must be supported by employers, voluntary organizations, scientific and medical professionals, agencies involved in rehabilitation work and, above all, the disabled themselves. It should also be ensured, through these collective efforts, that the opportunities and facilities offered by the Government are utilized not only in urban areas, but equally, in semi-urban and rural areas of our country.

In order to forge this community participation, it is necessary to create a nation-wide awareness of the problems encountered by the disabled population. At the same time, there needs to be more stress on opportunities available to redress their difficulties. The National Awards, by highlighting the achievements of individuals and organizations, play an important role in this regard. The mass media, particularly television with its vast outreach, should make a special effort to project these achievements so as to inspire both the disadvantaged and society at large.

Today, a significant process of change is underway in the nation wherein the private sector is shouldering a greater share of responsibilities. This must be reflected in the social sector as well. Private endeavours should supplement governmental efforts in providing employment opportunities and facilities for the disabled. This is not charity or aid, but will be of advantage to both. Indeed, the private sector can play an important role in nurturing and

developing the special talents which many of these individuals possess. At the same time, they also have a duty to ensure high standards of industrial safety in order to prevent disabilities, which may result from accidents at the workplace.

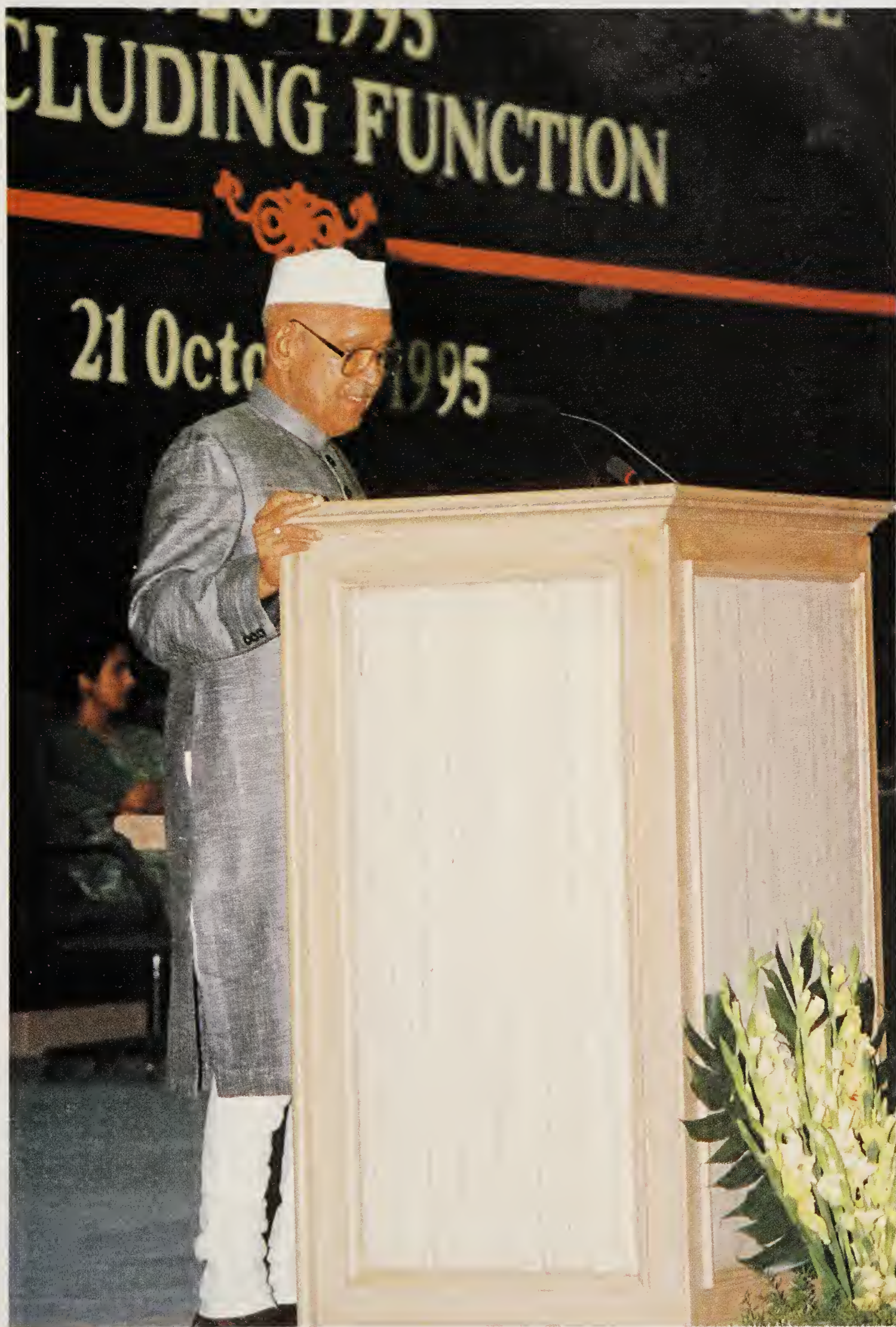
The example and experience of the winners of the National Awards is a source of great encouragement to others in a similar situation, and indeed, to the community in which they live. Even as we recognize them, let us also acknowledge the support and sustenance provided by their families and friends. Let us strive to strengthen our collective efforts as a nation, to ensure that the disabled participate fully, equally and actively in our quest for progress and prosperity.

Prevention is Better Than Cure

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to associate myself with the foundation-stone laying ceremony for the Prajyoti Niketan Holistic Super Speciality Hospital here in Pudukad. Your organization, which enjoys the patronage of the Franciscan Capuchins, reflects the best spirit of the Christian tradition of service to society. As it is said by Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount : “In the service of my people, do thou serve me.”

I would also like to recall the beautiful and inspiring prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of your Order, which conveys the message of service of Christianity :

“Make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring love;
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there is doubt, true faith in You;
Where there is discouragement, let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, let me bring light,
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.”



*Speech at Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of Modern School, New Delhi,
21 October 1995*

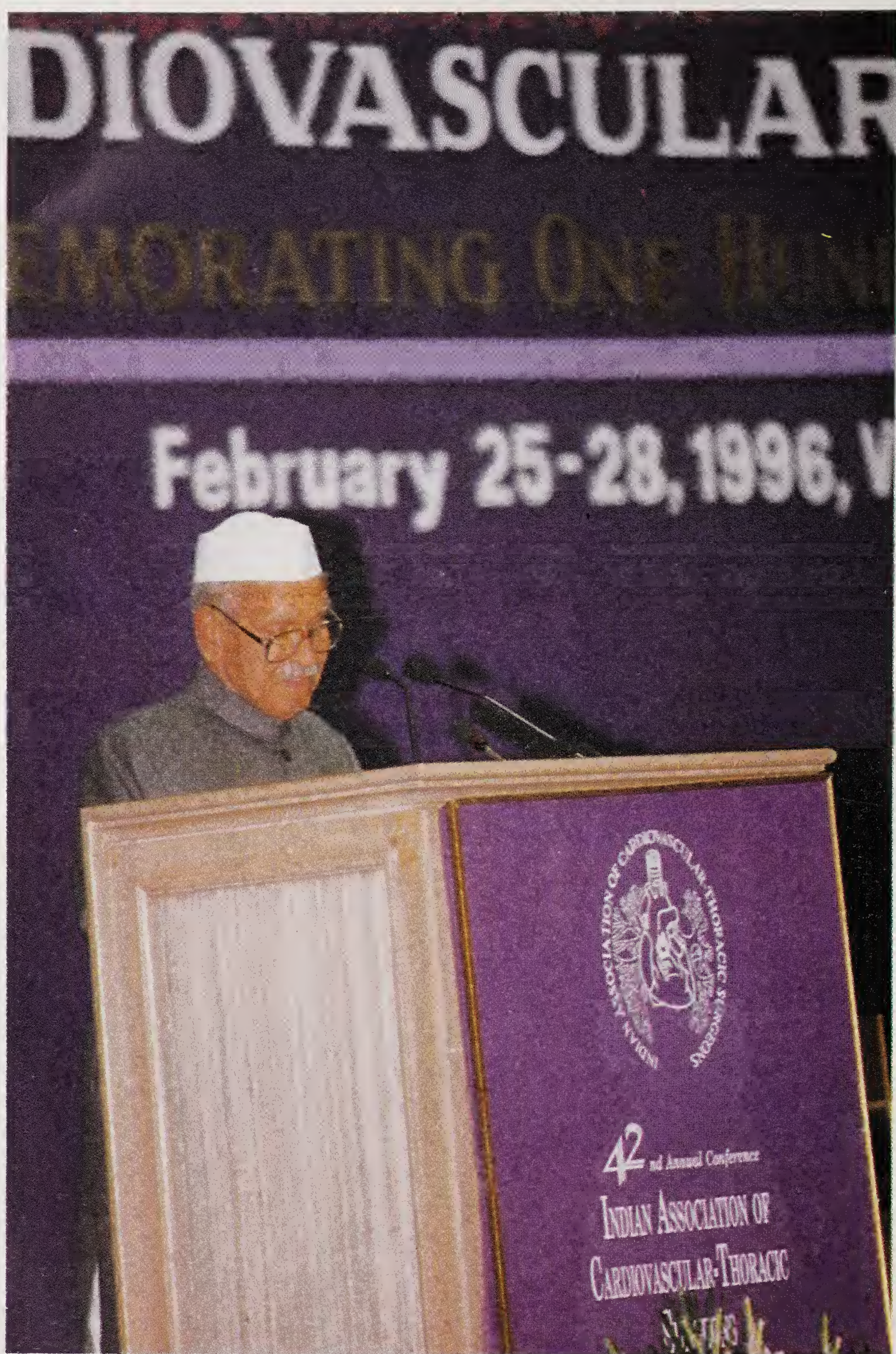
Speech at the Eleventh APOSHO Conference on Safety, Health and Environment: Workable Solutions, New Delhi, 16 November 1995



Unveiling the statue of A.R. Rajaraja Varma, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996



*While laying the foundation-stone of the Holistic Super Speciality Hospital,
Pudukad, 15 February 1996*



Inaugurating the Annual Conference of the Indian Association of Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeons, New Delhi, 25 February 1996

Inaugurating the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, 27 July 1996



Presenting of National Awards to Teachers, New Delhi, 5 September 1996

*On the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Adi Sankaracharya,
Kancheepuram, 20 September 1996*



*At the presentation of awards for the Maulana Azad Essay Competition for
1994-95, New Delhi, 11 November 1996*

At the presentation of the National Safety Award, 26 November 1996



Inauguration of Golden Jubilee Session of Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, 19 December 1996

New Year Greetings to children, 1 January 1997



At Stamp Release function at Rourkee University, 1 January 1997

This message of service, love and compassion, is indeed the underlying message of all our religions.

Christianity reached the shores of India, of Kerala, as early as 52 AD, when Saint Thomas the Apostle landed near Cranganor and propagated the message of peace, goodwill, harmony and service. Since then, the Christian faith has flourished in India. It has contributed significantly to our pluralistic ethos, our rich cultural diversity and our underlying unity and oneness. Particularly noteworthy has been the role of the Church in the spread of education and health facilities throughout the country.

The Prajyoti Niketan has followed this great tradition of service by providing higher education in several fields to the students in this area. As you expand, diversify and enhance your activities by building a super speciality hospital, your organization will contribute in substantial measure to improving the quality of life and health of the people. The hospital is expected to provide modern facilities and vital dimension to medicine—the concept of holistic medicine.

The application of this philosophy of “holism”, according to which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, to medicine, is not new. In fact, in our ancient tradition, holistic medicine aims at achieving perfect health—a state where a human being is in complete harmony as an integrated physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual entity. The objective is to obtain harmony within and without, i.e., of the body and mind with society and with nature.

Our system of Ayurveda which goes back beyond sixth century B.C. adopted an integrated approach to man, nature and society. The medical knowledge, particularly of surgery, which existed at that time has been recorded in the great *Susruta* and *Charaka Samhita*. According to this philosophy of holistic medicine, an antidote to a disease is a necessary condition for a cure but is not a sufficient condition. To eliminate a disease in its totality, it would be necessary to identify the root-causes and address them.

Your integrated approach to medicine, taking into account all related aspects of a problem including psychological, physical, social, natural and others, is indeed praiseworthy. It is heartening to note that in your hospital you would have both Indian and Western systems of medicine including Allopathy, Ayurveda and Homeopathy. The Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy and other systems of indigenous medicine too have been prevalent in India for generations. To encourage awareness and promote the use of these traditions, the Government has set up a department for Indian Systems of Medicine and Health under the Ministry of Health.

Amidst the tensions and worries of modern life, several new diseases have emerged. Diseases of mental stress, high blood-pressure, hypertension, heart problems, cancer, AIDS, drug addiction and several other disorders have become very prominent in society. Many of these are related to new social mores and practices, life-styles and work methods. They are also related to our dietary habits, lack of exercise, problems of environmental pollution and other factors. A holistic approach would be of immense use in addressing these issues.

I am particularly glad to learn that the importance of faith and prayer in the process of holistic healing has been emphasized in your institution. The nurturing and nourishing of our emotional and spiritual personality will go a long way in bringing man into harmony with himself, with society and with nature.

I trust that in your hospital, you would also maintain facilities for research into both modern and ancient systems of medicine. Remedies for present ailments might be found in the treatments and cures prescribed by our forefathers. I would simply like to draw your attention to the curative and medicinal properties of *neem*, which we have known for generations, but which is something which has been discovered by the West only recently.

May I conclude by recalling the old adage : "Prevention is better than cure". In today's environment it is essential for individuals and for society as a whole to be aware of the requirements of the body and of the mind. This awareness should be inculcated right from childhood by parents and teachers. The Prajyoti Niketan, which is both an educational institution and a medical facility is well placed to promote the message of healthy living.

Cardiac Diseases — Treatment and Cure

I HAVE IMMENSE pleasure in associating myself with the 42nd annual conference of the Indian Association of Cardiovascular

Thoracic Surgeons. Your conference this year is of particular significance since the world is commemorating 100 years of cardiac surgery.

Since 1896, when Ludwig Rehn created history by suturing a wound of the heart, medical science and technology have made spectacular progress in this field. From the initial emphasis on correction of congenital heart defects through surgery, followed by the incorporation of the heart-lung machine into heart surgery by John H. Gibbon in 1953, the most significant development was the first successful cardiac transplant undertaken in 1967 by Dr. Christian Barnard of South Africa. Indian medical history was created when Dr. P. Venugopal and his team from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences performed this feat in India in 1994.

It may perhaps not be so well known amongst the fraternity of doctors trained in Western systems of medicine, that the ancient treatises of Ayurveda in India, particularly the *Charaka* and *Susruta Samhita* contain a treasure of practical knowledge about cures and treatment of a variety of diseases, including heart diseases. If I may give you just one instance, the Ayurvedic medicine, *Sarpagandha*, commonly used to treat high blood-pressure has been known in India for generations.

The *Charaka Samhita* makes a number of prescriptions concerning cardiac problems. In section 26 there are several postulates which refer to different characteristics of cardiac conditions. Alluding to the effect of heart problems, Charaka says :

“हृद्रोगनिदानम्
व्यायामतीक्ष्णातिविरेकवस्ति -
चिन्ताभयत्रासगदातिचारा :।
छर्द्यामसन्धारणकर्षणानि
हृद्रोगकर्तृणि तथाऽभिघातः ॥”

(Excessive exertion, intake of fatty meals, use of purgatives, worry, fear, anxiety, improper use of medicines, vomiting, rheumatic disease, artificial obstructions to usual bodily functions, dieting or injury to body or heart, are the causes of cardiac diseases). Incidentally, Charaka also makes particular mention of the positive effect of buttermilk.

The causes of heart disease noticed by Charaka are not very different from those of angina as we know it today. And this was more than two millennia ago!

I have gone into details of Ayurveda or the “Science of Life”

for two reasons. I recall growing up in an environment which attached importance to Ayurveda. It provided a cure for all types of diseases and, indeed, a philosophy, a holistic approach for living a healthy life of body and mind in harmony with society and nature. The second reason, and the more important one, is that I have tried to give you a glimpse of the immense storehouse of knowledge in our ancient *Shastras*.

The extent of research, practical information and wisdom of our ancient seers and sages may in fact hold useful lessons which we could draw upon in order to bring calm and harmony into our own daily lives. If I may illustrate, the science of Yoga, which provides a holistic approach to health, both physical and spiritual, is widely practised throughout the world. Its beneficial impact in the treatment of a variety of diseases, including cardiac problems, is well recognized.

Amidst the tensions and pressures of modern life, heart disease has emerged as a major cause of premature fatalities and disabilities in India, as indeed in other parts of the world. The terms high blood-pressure, hypertension, high cholesterol, angina and heart attack, have become very common words. Cardiac ailments affect rich and poor alike. All sections of society, in rural and urban areas, are susceptible to this disease.

The increasing frequency of these ailments is related to modern work and life-styles, social mores, habits and attitudes and the general lack of exercise and physical well-being. Eating habits which involve intake of food, rich in oil and fat, too take their toll on the heart. Fortunately however, rapid advances in medical science and in heart surgery, involving the application of modern techniques of ballooning and angioplasty, laser and bypass surgery, heart transplants and other methods, have made it possible to arrest and, indeed, cure and disease. Cardiac surgery has enabled millions of people across the world to obtain a new lease of life.

Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that surgery provides only a temporary reprieve. Heart diseases have a tendency to recur. It, therefore, becomes essential to adopt a more healthy life-style. The mass media, with its vast reach, affords a significant opportunity to the Government, medical fraternity, non-governmental and voluntary organizations to propagate healthy living.

The challenge before the medical profession today and, indeed, society as a whole, is to provide access to modern treatment for heart diseases to all sections of the people in all areas, at

affordable rates. Some years ago, people travelled abroad for cardiac surgery. Thereafter, some of the metro cities began to offer this treatment. Today, with super speciality hospitals coming up in different parts of the country, the availability of this treatment is becoming more widespread. Only in the last few weeks, I have been associated with functions relating to the establishment of super speciality hospitals in several States. These projects will undoubtedly have a major beneficial impact on the life and the health of the communities in these areas. What is of vital importance is to ensure that these facilities are available to all those in need.

It is understandable that speciality hospitals should be viable and self-sustaining but profit cannot be the only, or even a major objective. Service to humanity and not personal benefit is the abiding message of our civilization. Dharmaraja Yudhisthira said :

“न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं न पुनर्भवम्।
कामये दुःख तप्तानां प्राणिनां आर्तनाशनम्॥”

(I seek no kingdoms nor heavenly pleasure nor personal salvation, since to relieve humanity from its manifold pains and distresses is the supreme objective of mankind).

The medical profession is devoted to service to the people, irrespective of whether or not they can bear the financial burden of medical treatment. Our underlying philosophy should be based on the axiom that :

“शांति धन से नहीं मन से मिलती है।”

(Peace, calm and harmony cannot be found in wealth; it obtains from within, from the mind).

Modern treatment facilities should be available to all those in need. Perhaps, some of the speciality hospitals could set aside a certain proportion of their facilities for providing free or subsidized treatment to the poor and needy. The super speciality hospital in Puttaparthi provides free treatment to those who are unable to afford it. I understand many other hospitals too follow a similar practice. I would encourage others to emulate this noble example.

It is necessary for all of us, the Government, private sector,

non-governmental organizations and the medical community to encourage the growth of these facilities throughout the country. At a time when there has been an opening up of our economy and the policies of economic liberalization are in force, the role of the private sector in shouldering a greater share of social responsibilities has become more important. Indeed hospitals have emerged as a priority area for private, domestic as well as foreign investment. The NRI community, which includes a large number of successful doctors continues to play a key role in the financing and establishment of these treatment centres. I would like to see much greater interaction between our own medical fraternity and NRI doctors abroad in such ventures.

The Indian Association of Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeons has contributed much to the advancement of technology, research and training in the speciality areas of heart disease and surgery in India. This annual conference provides an excellent forum for scientific deliberations, exchange of ideas, opinions and presentations not only amongst Indian surgeons but also with experts from abroad. I am informed that the scientific journal of your Association accords an important opportunity for Indian surgeons to publish and share their experiences and knowledge with other members of the fraternity.

With the availability of modern communications and information technology, an area in which India has a comparative advantage, electronic access to data and information is possible at the touch of a button. These modern technologies should facilitate your work not only for research but also for diagnostic treatment and indeed, surgery. Your Association is well placed to promote the extensive use of these new technologies and innovations in our hospitals. This will enhance efficiency and result in the provision of better treatment for the public.

I am sure this conference will be successful in spreading knowledge and awareness about latest advances and research in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery and of their applications for improving the health of the people. I have no doubt that your efforts, which are of signal importance, will make an important contribution to society.

Population Growth Impedes Progress

I AM HAPPY to be present on this occasion when we observe the “World Population Day”. On this day in 1988, the world’s five-billionth child was born. It is a reminder of the constant and inexorable ticking of the population clock. It serves as a warning to all of us to address effectively and with dispatch, one of the most crucial issues facing our society, indeed, the entire planet, namely, the unsustainable growth of population.

A special responsibility devolves upon countries in Asia since the most significant increase in population is taking place in our continent. In India alone our population has grown by more than two-and-a-half times during the years after Independence. At the present rate of growth, we would exceed one billion before the end of this century.

It is a tribute to our visionary leaders, scientists and administrators and above all to the common people, whose toil and effort have enabled India to convincingly rebut the dire Malthusian theories and prophecies of famine and starvation. We have successfully harnessed science and technology for the benefit of our people. The Green Revolution has ensured that the increase in foodgrains production has kept pace with and, in fact, surpassed the growth of our population.

Though India can justifiably be proud of this achievement, there remains a considerable distance to travel before a large number of our people can break free from the shackles of poverty, malnutrition and disease. Despite economic advancement, the benefits of growth and development have been neutralized to a considerable extent by an ever-expanding population. Impressive strides have been made in the areas of housing, education, health and nutrition for the common man. And yet, we have been unable to keep pace with the growing requirements for these facilities and services. Even greater efforts are required to escape from the vicious circle of poverty and overpopulation, which perpetuate each other.

Our planners and policy-makers were acutely conscious of the need for a concerted nation-wide effort to curb population

growth. As a result several programmes and initiatives for propagating family planning and the small family norm were launched. The National Family Welfare Programme, the Universal Immunization Programme and the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Project have brought down infant and maternal mortality rates as well as fertility rates. There is greater awareness and application of birth control measures. Women are more conscious of the importance of proper spacing of children to ensure the health of both, mother and child. Though the rate of growth of population has declined, the present figure which I am told stands at 2.14 per cent remains unacceptably high.

Experience over several decades in India and abroad has convincingly demonstrated that a holistic multi-dimensional approach is required. Population growth cannot be controlled effectively, unless we also address the social issues of gender equity, literacy, cultural mores and behavioural patterns. Equally, development-related issues such as poverty, nutrition and rural labour force requirements among others, impinge on the growth of population in a variety of ways. Thus, for instance a mother with several children finds it difficult to provide adequate nutrition, education and health care to her offspring. This results in high rates of disease and mortality, and in turn further entrenches social preferences for large families. It, therefore, becomes necessary to adopt an approach which fully integrates population concerns and social issues into development strategies.

A central element in such an approach is the status of women. Gender inequity is pervasive in our social and economic system. Perceptible differences between men and women in the rates of mortality, ages at marriage, literacy, employment and access to health facilities, testify to the lower position of women in society. Indeed, the empowerment of women is critical for the success of our efforts to control the growth of the population and to foster rapid economic development.

If I may cite just one instance to illustrate this fact, States such as Kerala, and Goa which have achieved high levels of literacy, including female literacy, are not only more prosperous but also have much lower rates of growth of population than States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where female literacy is much lower. If we can learn from each others experience and try and replicate the success stories, we will make a major headway in achieving our goals.

A crucial element in the spectrum of issues relating to the status of women which I referred to earlier, and which has an

important bearing on family welfare and population control, is the availability of health facilities to women and children. In addition to proper nutrition, access to basic pre-and-post-natal care, will provide for a healthier environment which in turn will contribute to lowering birth rates.

I am glad that you have selected the slogan "Mother's health is child's health" for the new five-rupee coin. We could even go further to say that "Mother's education is child's education." Bapu had said, "Education of children mainly depends on mothers." You would also recall the oft-quoted saying that "When you educate a man, you educate an individual; when you educate a woman, you educate a family." It is truly a selfless love which binds a mother to her child. It is on the mother that the sacred responsibility of bringing up her child, particularly during infancy, rests. In order, therefore, to provide a kind, caring and supportive environment, it is necessary to ensure that the mother has access to education, health facilities and proper nutrition.

In addition to providing these basic amenities, our policies and projects should be tailored to meet the needs of the people and address common concerns and anxieties. Even today, misperceptions about certain types of birth control measures, such as vasectomy, persist. Deep-rooted social prejudices which include preference for male offspring continue to adversely affect efforts for population control.

Our programmes should treat these matters with sensitivity and understanding. People should feel that the programmes are in their best interest and indeed belong to them. Their association with the preparation, implementation and the monitoring of programmes, will elicit their active support and participation. Such a client-based approach, I understand, is already being implemented in the Reproductive and Child Health Programme.

The revitalised Panchayati Raj institutions, which provide for a more significant participation of women, should become an effective forum to address family welfare issues. Equally, it is important to associate with these programmes, non-governmental and voluntary organizations which have vast experience of working in the field and have built up a close rapport with the people. The recent Pulse Polio Immunization campaign, which brought together governmental and non-governmental institutions and involved effective utilization of electronic mass media, was a remarkable success. This experience provides us with valuable insights for undertaking similar campaigns in other areas.

As we prepare to step into the 21st century, let us strengthen

our resolve to restore the harmony between man and nature. Let us enhance efforts to bring down the growth of population to sustainable levels. We can ensure this only by successfully propagating the small family norm. This battle has to be won in the minds of people. They must be convinced that smaller families are healthier families, more prosperous families, and most important, happier families. Let us all work collectively with dedication to achieve this important goal.

Red Cross in the Service of People

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Karnataka Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society and with the inauguration of your new Blood Bank Complex.

Founded in Europe during the grief and despair of war to alleviate the pain and sufferings of wounded soldiers, the Red Cross has, over the decades, transformed itself into a worldwide movement whose peace-time activities now account for the larger part of their efforts.

The Red Cross has become a universal symbol of service, succour and support for suffering people. As Pandit Nehru said about forty years ago, in October 1957, at the XIX International Red Cross Conference in New Delhi :

“The Red Cross represents the touch of healing, the soothing touch . . . What the world requires today, more than anything else is this touch of healing not only to the body but also to the tortured mind of humanity.”

In India, the Red Cross has provided this touch of healing to people in distress. It has come to the aid of the people during natural and man-made disasters. Indeed, it has remained in the forefront of rehabilitation efforts. The volunteers of the Red Cross

have joined hands with the Government and other agencies in providing food, clothing and shelter to the needy. The role of the Red Cross in extending assistance to the people affected by the terrible earthquakes in Uttarkashi in 1991 and in Latur and Osmanabad in 1993 is still fresh in public memory. After the shocking Dabwali fire in December, 1995, the Red Cross rendered valuable assistance to the victims and the many families traumatised by this incident. Similarly, the contribution of the Red Cross to alleviating the sufferings of the people during floods and droughts in diverse parts of our country deserves our commendation, as does their work in other areas.

Though the work of the Red Cross during natural calamities is well known, there is an immense effort of enduring value which the volunteers of this organization put into their regular activities, which requires more widespread public awareness. The Red Cross is engaged in diverse fields of public health including among others, the provision of maternity and child care, family welfare services, health education, first aid, hospital and nursing services and community services.

I am glad to be informed that the Karnataka Branch of the Red Cross Society has undertaken these and related activities with dedication and success. I am told that they have enlarged the scope of their work to include the welfare of the handicapped. By providing artificial limbs and appliances, they have enabled physically-challenged individuals to lead fuller, more self-reliant and productive lives. I congratulate the Karnataka Branch of the Red Cross Society and all those associated with it for its long years of service to the people of Karnataka and neighbouring States. I would urge them to strengthen and extend their sphere of activities to include in particular the weaker and downtrodden sections of society and people in rural and far-flung areas who are most in need of their support.

In public perception, the Red Cross is perhaps most closely associated with its work relating to blood donation. In our country it has played a pioneering role in moulding public opinion in favour of blood donation and in arranging for the infrastructural and other facilities essential for the storage and transmittal of blood to those in need. The new Blood Bank Complex here in Bangalore, marks a significant improvement in these facilities and represents an important step in the provision of better health care to our people. With its modern equipment, it should engender confidence both amongst donors and recipients of blood. The

application of safe and hygienic procedures for drawing blood and the use of state-of-the-art techniques for screening, storage and transfusion of blood is a pressing requirement in our country, particularly, as the gap between demand and supply for this precious life-saving resource enlarges, and possibilities of blood tainted by new types of viruses such as HIV, increase. It is vital to upgrade and improve blood safety and screening procedures in all our blood banks and hospitals.

As we look ahead to the tasks in the future, it is important that the Karnataka Branch of the Red Cross Society strives to magnify its activities in terms of range as well as pace and quality, keeping uppermost in mind the key purpose that gives meaning to the existence of the Red Cross, namely, the service of the people and assistance to those in distress. To secure this purpose, in my view, these words of Mahatma Gandhi are like a shaft of brilliant light illuminating our path. Bapu had said :

“Voluntary service of others demands the best of which one is capable.”

Bapu did not merely speak about service. He rendered selfless service to the wounded and the suffering during the Boer War in South Africa. He personally ministered to the patients of leprosy when the disease was regarded with great dread, fear and prejudice. The loving care with which he tended the eminent Sanskrit scholar, Parchure Shastri, who was suffering from leprosy, is a noble example of service. I recall some words of Narsi Mehta which were very close to Bapu's heart and which express his philosophy of selfless service, which should serve as a beaconlight to us all :

“वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिए जे पीर पराई जाणे रे
पर दुखे उपकार करे तोये मन अभिमान न आणे रे।”

(A man of God is one who knows the sufferings of others, he is a person who renders service with humility.)

The deep conviction that selfless service is the path to salvation is an abiding theme in our ancient tradition. Saint Basaveswara preached the message of “Kayaka ve Kailasa” or “work is worship”, eight centuries ago. It remains a perennial source of inspiration.

Let us all draw sustenance from these words of wisdom of our seers. May they guide our thoughts and actions.

IV
EDUCATION, ART
AND CULTURE

Power of Youth – Key to Our National Revival

IT GIVES ME great happiness to be with all of you today at the inauguration of the First National Youth Festival. Addressing this gathering brings back a flood of memories, memories of Bhopal and its growth, of visits by Panditji and others, and of the spirit of adventure with which we embarked on the process of national reconstruction.

This Festival has brought together youth from different parts of India and abroad. Its range of activities covers dance and music, debating and poetry as well as exhibitions of skill and talent in various fields. You have an opportunity to see famous artistes perform, many of whom are role models. In music and dance, which are the focus for this Festival, both classical and folk traditions are reflected. Our arts have an extraordinary variety and yet are uniquely harmonious. Indeed, harmony is the essence of both music and dance, and one might say, of life itself. Just as we harmonize different notes to produce a wonderful tune, the diversity of our people, their language and their culture fuses together to produce the one nation that is India. The greater the variety, the richer are our arts, as is our nation. The Tamil nationalist poet Subramania Bharati wrote of the eighteen languages sweet in which we sing our praises of Mother Bharat in manifold ways. Though we may have numerous languages, our voice is one. That is the message of this Festival.

The power of youth is the key to our national revival. One of the greatest exponents of the strength and capability of the youth of India was Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday we commemorate today. An extremely powerful speaker, he sought to shake the nation from its complacency. His exhortation shook an entire generation and contributed to the resurgence of nationalism. “Arise, awake, sleep no more; stop not till the goal is reached. Within each

of you there is the power to remove all wants and miseries. Believe this and that power will be manifested”, he said.

Swami Vivekananda’s dream was to transform India into a modern society, committed to humanism and tolerance. He saw progress not as a slavish imitation of others but as building on the foundations of our cultural heritage. Swami Vivekananda sought to instill pride and consciousness in the younger generation. But it was not a narrow pride he envisaged. Firmly rejecting fanaticism and intolerance, he subscribed to the composite culture of India.

When we began the process of national reconstruction after Independence, this message of India’s unity in diversity was symbolised by Pt. Nehru. “India”, he said, “will be a land, as in the past, of many faiths, equally honoured and respected, but of one national outlook” In appreciating and spreading this ethos, Panditji felt that youth has a special role. His faith in them was manifest and overflowing. I recall his visit to this State to 1963, just a year before his death, when he was laying the foundation-stone for a college. He spoke of how his generation had gained both wisdom and stature by following Bapu and through their close association with him. Panditji said that his time was coming to a close and expressed confidence that the younger generation would carry the torch forward.

In the three decades that have passed, we have sought to live up to his expectations by building a strong and self-reliant nation which can take its due place in the councils of the world. There was no more apt a symbol of the confidence and enthusiasm of the younger generation than Rajiv Gandhi, his grandson. It is appropriate that this Festival is dedicated to Rajivji’s memory.

This Festival has provided an opportunity for youth from different parts of the country to come together, to work together and to learn from each other. That is important in itself. Many of the activities at the Festival have a competitive aspect. Such competition helps bring out initiative and enterprise. The satisfaction that you have done your best is as valuable as success itself. The willingness to contribute, which may begin at a gathering like this,

will carry on to your professional or public life tomorrow. Team work is another important characteristic of these activities. It can be achieved only by practice, and not by sermons.

“One ounce of practice is worth twenty thousand tonnes of big talk” Vivekananda often said. If the children of India inculcate this spirit, our country will be more disciplined, productive and stronger.

Swami Vivekananda used to say that it was more important for the youth to learn to play football than to read the Gita. There is an important message in this statement. The lessons you learn from life are something which cannot be taught in schools and colleges.

When you begin your adult life as responsible citizens, it must be with a full commitment to your heritage, your culture and to your nation. On his return from America, Swami Vivekananda exhorted: “Be strong ... and everything else will follow. I have faith in my country and especially in the youth of the country ... From the youth will come the power which will raise India once more to her proper place.”

Dweep Mahotsava – In the Cultural Life of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

I AM VERY happy to be with all of you at the inauguration of the Dweep Mahotsava. This Festival is an important event in the cultural life of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. I extend my best wishes for its success.

The Festival represents an occasion to generate greater awareness about the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is

a time when the local people of these Islands give others a glimpse of their traditions and customs. The Festival brings together the diverse people who live on these Islands, strengthening their common identity. It also provides an opportunity for interaction with the cultures of the mainland, represented here by artistes from various zonal cultural centres.

These Islands boast of an impressive diversity of languages, religions and ethnicities. They are truly a mini-India in the seas. The languages spoken here range from Hindi to Tamil, Malayalam to Bengali and Telugu to Marathi. Even a brief stay has left a vivid impression of the strength of a composite culture that has evolved as a result. The harmonious coexistence of different faiths is another characteristic of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This synthesis of different cultures and beliefs is what we seek to strengthen at the national level. The secular ethos of these Islands is an example to all of us and I hope that visitors from other parts of India will take back this message to their respective States.

The existence of a tribal culture is one of the more unique aspects of these Islands. As we nurture diversity throughout our land, special attention must be paid to those whose way of life is threatened by the pressures of modernity. This is not an easy task. We cannot deny to any of our people the benefits of development. Yet, in the name of development, we should not erode their identity. Striking a delicate balance is the challenge before all of us. The culture of a people is intangible, and yet, irreplaceable. Let us give it due value and ensure the welfare of the tribal people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

This Festival supports a range of activities which reflects the intermingling of diverse streams. It expresses both the heritage of the past and expectation of the future. Traditional tribal sports will be on display which will contribute to our appreciation of a way of life. Activities such as the Food Festival, Flower Show or Cultural Shows will allow individual cultures here to express themselves. Such aspects of life, ordinary in themselves, are of great value in building the mosaic that is India. Consider today that a Hindi song is sung in the South, that South Indian dishes are popular in the

North, that Bengali tourists travel to Bombay or that television programmes have a national audience. Tourism, Food, Films or Media are concrete examples of the integrative process at work. They help to make the one India.

Representatives of different cultural zones of the country are here for the Festival. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are members of both the East Zone and the South Zone. There are regions which are disparate in one sense, and yet have an underlying unity. From whichever region of India they may originate, a sense of commonality has characterized our literature, arts and our religions. There are, for example, extraordinary similarities between the compositions of the Alvar Saints in Tamil Nadu and of Shankardev and Madhavdev in Assam. The devotional outpouring of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal is not much different from the verses of Surdas in North India. This ethos, which encourages individual cultures to flourish while strengthening their common elements, is a uniquely Indian one.

In religion too, we revere above all, those who have promoted tolerance and strengthened secularism. Ashoka and Akbar are regarded as examples of good rulers. The Bhakti Movement and Sufism are widely admired for their intermixture of traditions. Bapu and Panditji are seen as builders of modern India because of their message that all communities must live together in harmony and understanding. This has been our way of life in the past. And it must be so in the future. The coming together of cultures enriches all of them.

Our goals and aspirations, and the manner in which we strive to achieve them, is very much part of our culture. As our interaction with other societies becomes more intensive, tourism will assume greater importance as an industry. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands which are veritably an environmental paradise, have a tremendous potential in this regard. But its development must be judicious, giving due regard to its ecology and its cultural and social fabric. I am glad that while the Festival has laid emphasis on tourism promotion, its focus is on activities like water sports, trekking and camping, which are essentially in harmony with nature.

These Islands and their history represent powerful symbols of our freedom movement, and thus, of our national integration. The Dweep Mahotsava will contribute to that common aim of ours – a united and prosperous India, where all its people live in peace and harmony.

Music Transcends All Barriers

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today for the presentation of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Awards for 1994. I extend my felicitations to the distinguished recipients of the highest national honour in performing arts present here with us. In honouring outstanding artistes from the world of music, theatre and dance, we recognize not only their individual contribution to the world of arts but affirm the importance of cherishing and developing our precious cultural heritage.

This heritage has its roots in the very dawn of history. The hymns of the Vedas are humankind's earliest musical records. The *Sama Veda* is supposed to be sung and in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna emphasizes its transcendental value thus:

“वेदानाम् सामवेदोस्मि”

Musical instruments and forms of dance and music are associated with specific aspects of divinity : dance and rhythm with Nataraja, the Veena with Saraswati and the Flute with Lord Krishna. Bharata's *Natya Shastra* has a special place in the scientific study of performing arts. These are the traditions which have permeated our way of life, finding reflection in diverse aspects of human activity. The basic forces that vitalize our society are their

sustenance, and themes, religious and secular alike, their inspiration. The enormous range of the beliefs, customs and mores of our people has expressed itself fully in various forms of these arts. The Fellowships and Awards being conferred today reflect in some measure the depth and extent of this diversity. These distinctions underline the need to nurture and sustain what is our defining characteristic, without which India would not be India.

Recognition of the unity underlying the apparently diverse is as fundamental to the world of arts as it is to other aspects of our culture. A surpassingly beautiful and profound verse of the *Bhagavad Gita* comes to mind :

“सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥”

(Know That to be the highest wisdom which perceives and understands the innate oneness and unity pervading all — even the apparently divided.)

Our long history has witnessed the infusion of many streams and their intermingling with those already established in our land. Unlike some other societies, we remained open to noble thoughts of all origins, confident that we could draw the best from them. Synthesis and harmony, therefore, came as naturally to our arts as to our way of life. The passage of time only renewed further the centrality of co-existence, acceptance and understanding to India's national identity. The world of arts has always ensured that these values are the basis for building a strong composite society. It must continue to provide the leadership to shape our growth in the right direction.

Culture is a source of pride for all peoples, nations and societies. If it is to be a positive force, this must be a pride both open and large-hearted. Where there is narrowness, bigotry or dogmatism, cultural pride will lead to intolerance. The world has witnessed, to its cost, far too often, the misuse of cultural traditions to spread parochial thinking and aggressive attitudes. More often than not, claims to purify a culture and present it in a pristine form are but attempts to propagate an exclusivist attitude, to rewrite history

and deny a heritage which is a common inheritance. We know that it is in pluralistic and democratic societies, where experimentation is encouraged and differences respected, that a living culture can truly grow. Equally, we must recognize how much cultural diversity can contribute to the strengthening of the democratic spirit and, therefore, value it all the more.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the inspiration for this Akademi and others, was acutely sensitive to the need to develop our living traditions. He saw no conflict between the assertion of our national identity and an interaction with the world in the realms of ideas and expression. Indeed, he visualized this process as serving both India's interests and that of the world as a whole. In a speech in 1948, he said : "I am proud of India, not only because of her ancient, magnificent heritage, but also because of her remarkable capacity to add to it by keeping the doors and windows of her mind and spirit open to fresh and invigorating winds from distant lands She was far too strong to be submerged by outside streams, and she was too wise to isolate herself from them, and so there is a continuing synthesis in India's real history..."

An appreciation of our cultural heritage is an important element in generating awareness of our own national self-esteem and worth. One of the unfortunate legacies of the colonial period is that many of our achievements and traditions were run down as part of a systematic effort to erode our national confidence. The rejuvenation of arts is fundamental to the resurrection of India. The richness, depth, vitality and beauty of our arts have a vital role in strengthening our national identity. They help us realize that each society, ours particularly so, has its own unique values, goals and aspirations and that development is not to be equated with a blind imitation of any dominant system. At a time when mass media based on modern technologies facilitate the ingress of different values and social mores, I believe that our cultural ethos acquires even greater importance. We must be discerning and judicious in our interaction, absorbing only that which is wholesome, positive and beneficial. In this context, we should remember these words of Bapu: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about

my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”

The importance of Art and Culture, as underpinnings to our progress and development, has long been understood in our country. For this reason, the State emerged as the main patron of the arts. With Independence, our investment in this crucial sector resumed as part of our reconstruction endeavours. These very Akademies were envisaged as centres of excellence to preserve traditions, promote their development, enrich techniques and participate in the free flow of ideas. It is important that Government continue, and in fact further expand, its patronage of our creative community. At the same time, reflecting the larger trends of our development, there must be substantial participation in and support for cultural activities by the private sector.

The Akademi Fellowships have been conferred today on men of music who have become legends in their own lifetime. They symbolize the vital contribution which Arts can make towards understanding and friendship between people and amongst societies. Their achievements attest the old adage that music transcends all barriers. The twenty-five Akademi Awards cover the range of our musicians, dancers and theatre personalities. Those we honour today will, I am sure, continue to inspire increasing understanding and appreciation of our arts and culture, particularly among the younger generation. May their message of building bonds of friendship through culture grow from strength to strength in the years ahead.

Human Resources Can Be India's Greatest Asset

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you at the concluding function of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Modern School. I

extend my greetings and good wishes to the teachers, pupils, their parents and the management of the School on this important anniversary and wish them success in the years ahead.

The emergence of Modern School as one of our premier educational institutions represents the realization of the vision of Lala Raghubir Singh. A number of eminent educationists were associated with the translation of his aspirations into reality. Among them, Ms. Kamla Bose and Mr. M.N. Kapur deserve special mention. The results of their endeavours are visible in the contribution which the alumni of Modern School have made in the diverse fields of our national life.

The personality of this School has been shaped by the philosophy which public schools have embodied. They have an outlook which focuses on building the character of their students. Imparting knowledge is undoubtedly an important aspect of this process. Indeed, Modern School has a consistent record of academic excellence which reflects the seriousness with which the academic curriculum is addressed. But education, as you all know, is much more than the transfer of information from the teacher to the student. It becomes meaningful only when it creates a value system in which knowledge is received and assimilated. Its importance is in providing the moral and ethical bearings to assess and appreciate the developments of life. Respect for different points of view is a vital part of education in a country with such a rich variety as ours. It is in the formative years that values of democracy, secularism and social justice should be inculcated. Similarly, pride in our heritage and nurturing of diversity, if taught young, will become second nature to us.

All-round development of personality is a distinguishing feature of sound education. This is reflected in encouragement to participate in sports and in artistic and cultural activities. The sense of healthy competition, fair play, goodwill and team work which is generated by such endeavours will stand students well in the years ahead. By these activities, one develops the fortitude to deal with adversity and the humility with which to accept success. One learns that cooperation with others often holds the key to

accomplishments. It was in this sense that the Duke of Wellington had said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.

Strengthening team work and developing a competitive edge are very much the requirements today in India. Swami Vivekananda, who envisaged in our youth the resurrection of India conveyed the same message in his remark that he considered it more important for the youth to learn to play football than to read the scriptures.

An education devoted to character-building encourages appreciation of individuals in their own worth. It has been our historical failing to allow criteria like caste, religion and social status to become the basis for judgement. Such narrow thinking created divisions within society and became an obstacle to our progress and development. If India is to become a modern society and take its due place in the councils of the world, we must learn to think in larger terms. The freedom struggle did much in this century to forge a sense of unity and national purpose. This brought us our Independence. Maintaining that spirit of unity and brotherhood is the current challenge, and the response of the coming generations will indicate whether we are successful.

“Children”, Panditji once said, “do not know much about these barriers which separate. They play or work with each other and it is only when they grow up that they begin to learn about these barriers from their elders.” Children must emerge from schooling as strong individuals with a sense of commitment and a spirit of service. They must be people who will be enriching, discerning and objective, with the capacity to build friendships and create oneness and unity around them.

Human resources, if properly developed, can be the greatest asset of our country. After all, it is the human factor which increases productivity, enhances creativity and encourages innovation. Education is the surest means of improving the resources we have and of shaping the direction of progress. Our ancient land which has the oldest traditions of learning, is today poised at the crossroads. On the one hand, we produce the best minds of the world who enrich not only our society but others as well. On the other, we

have a rapidly-growing segment of illiterates. This contradiction threatens to undermine all that we have achieved. In bridging it, the established schools and colleges of the country must devote their attention and energies to assisting the less fortunate of their brethren. Spreading the message of literacy is a national task to which we must all contribute. Indeed, there can be no better tribute to those whose vision of education and progress made this School possible.

Having been associated with the cause of education, I am aware of how unique is the bond between a teacher and a student. In the olden days, the student identified himself first of all as the *shishya* of the teacher. That relationship is now between the school and its students. The gathering of your alumni testifies to the loyalty and affection which this School has been able to inspire. The ideas and values of the school should guide your actions in life. These ideas and values are your true source of strength, the strength which your motto declares is necessary to achieve perfection:

“नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः”

I am indeed very glad to have been associated with this anniversary celebrations of the Modern School. I am confident that in the years to come, the School will build further on its traditions, achieve greater distinctions and aspire to even higher standards.

Tribute to Rajaraja Varma – Great Son of Kerala

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today as we honour a great son of Kerala, and of India, A.R. Rajaraja Varma. His fame as a grammarian, a poet, a literary critic and an educationist has spread

far beyond the boundaries of this State. Credited with laying the foundations of modern Malayalam, he symbolises the revival of pride in our cultural heritage. His endeavours led to broadening access to education, which was an important aspect of social change at the turn of this century. It is befitting that we have gathered here, at University College, an institution so closely associated with Rajaraja Varma, to honour that great man and his numerous contributions.

In the popular mind, Rajaraja Varma's name is inextricably linked to his monumental work, *Kerala Paniniyam*, published in 1896. By formulating the rules and structure of grammar of Malayalam, he greatly enhanced the proficiency of its usage in educational institutions and literary circles, as much as in daily life. The second edition of *Kerala Paniniyam*, which followed two decades later, reflected his extensive teaching experience. It is a testimony to Rajaraja Varma's genius that even now, this is considered the most authoritative work on the subject.

If grammar was one aspect of his contribution, Rajaraja Varma's literary endeavours were no less important in the emergence of Malayalam as a modern language. Moving away from a formal classical style which catered essentially to the elite, his works in prose and poetry were fashioned so as to reach out to a broader audience. He broke new ground by his simple and direct usage of language, which established a rapport with the common man. Rajaraja Varma's distinguishing feature was his sensitivity to the social context. It was this concern also which motivated his special effort to produce books for school students. The changes in literary style and format which he spearheaded led to a renaissance in Malayalam literature. As his biographer K.M. Gorge has said: "Rajaraja Varma gave a new orientation to literary writing and appreciation in Malayalam."

Rajaraja Varma authored technical works which are considered masterpieces in their field. His *Sahitya Sahayam* is regarded as a model for prose writing and *Bhashabhushanam* has few equals as a study of the style, genre and practice of poetry. Rajaraja Varma was also a noted Sanskrit scholar, and one of his great endeavours was

to translate Sanskrit classics. Translations are important in themselves, representing as they do the interaction of different cultures. They are a source of enrichment of any language and contribute to broadening horizons of knowledge. Rajaraja Varma's signal achievement was to translate the works of Kalidasa and Bhasa with an elegance and simplicity which made them extremely popular. I am told that his Malayalam *Shakuntalam* is a truly exquisite work and is still in great demand.

As with all men of culture, Rajaraja Varma had an open mind and a broad outlook. His Malayalam rendering of *Othello* is an example of his desire to make great literature accessible to our people. Deeply conversant with different aspects of Western thought, he also drew upon international literature and philosophy for inspiration for his works.

Rajaraja Varma's contribution to society, as a builder of institutions and an eminent educationist is well recognized. His keen perception of the importance of higher education led him to found the Sanskrit College and support the concept of a University in Kerala. His consistent promotion of Indian languages in school and university education is well known. So too are his efforts in modernizing their syllabi to keep pace with changing times. He did much to propagate the use of Malayalam in journalism.

As we pay tribute to this great figure, we must think of what his life and work mean to us in today's context. Rajaraja Varma understood the fundamental importance of education to human development. His effort at taking classics to the people and simplifying Malayalam illustrates this objective. In the years that have passed, Kerala has emerged as a pace-setter in India in regard to literacy and education. The imparting of basic skills is however only the beginning of greater endeavours. Improving the quality of our human resources must be the goal for which Kerala, and India, should strive. Bringing different cultures together is another significant aspect. I have mentioned Rajaraja Varma's translations of the great Sanskrit classics. Today, it is important that the rich corpus of literature we have in different languages is made available to all the people of India. It has long been my concern that we should pay

more attention to organising authentic translations of literature from one Indian language into others. I would like to see classical works written in Malayalam to be freely available in Hindi, Marathi or Bengali. Such exchanges will not only throw open the doors of cultural and intellectual understanding but will also constitute a powerful force for national integration.

Openness to ideas and thoughts is another important message of Rajaraja Varma's life. Where thoughts are narrow and the mind is shut, there can be no development. India has always grown when we have welcomed different streams and allowed them to inter-mingle. Our culture thus emerged rich and diverse. Kerala itself is the outstanding example of synthesis, pluralism and harmony. Such values must be strengthened.

A language with roots among its people will constantly develop. It will draw upon their life and experiences, and reflect their hopes and aspirations. Rajaraja Varma's historic contribution was to structure modern Malayalam and carry its literary message to the public. His endeavours must be appreciated as part of the reawakening in our society and the striving for progress.

In concluding, I would like to quote a poignant verse in memory of Rajaraja Varma, written by Kumaran Asan, another great literary figure of Kerala. He wrote:

“To lose everything
To submit to Fate
And end life at the funeral pyre-
That may be the Lord's will

But we will plant your sacred name
Water it with our tears and tend it
It will grow and spread
And bless all around
With the fragrance of its flowers
Even the fire of final destruction
Will not touch it.”

Let us build on the great legacy of Rajaraja Varma.

“Truth Shall Make You Free”

I HAVE IMMENSE pleasure in associating myself with the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Union Christian College, Alwaye. This great institution has completed 75 years of service to our society, particularly in Kerala. It has produced women and men of great renown and eminence, who have enriched our public life with their contributions.

The great message of Christianity, and indeed of all religions, is that service to humanity is service to God. Christianity reached the shores of India as early as 52 AD when St. Thomas, the Apostle of Lord Jesus Christ, is said to have landed near Cranganoor, not far from Alwaye. It is believed that he established seven Churches in the country. The Christian tradition has spread the gospel of care and compassion, charity and hope throughout the world. The work of the Church in India, in the spread of education has truly been a remarkable endeavour, which has met with notable success.

The motto of your college : “Truth shall make you free” encapsulates in a few words the great spiritual idea of India and of all religions. It is the philosophy of Bapu also. Writing about the common message of diverse religious traditions, in *Young India* of 22 December 1927, Bapu said : “I have not been able to see any difference between the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Today, supposing I was deprived of the Gita and forgot all its contents but had a copy of the Sermon, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the Gita.”

Our national motto is :

“सत्यमेव जयते”

Truth shall Triumph.

One of the well-known verses of the *Rig Veda* states :

“एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति”

Truth is one, the learned may describe it variously.

Of the many ways to Truth or to God, the path of learning and knowledge has found a place of prominence in our tradition. It has been said :

“सा विद्या या विमुक्तये”

Education is that which liberates

The *Rig Veda* contains several prayers seeking the bestowal of knowledge and wisdom. In a beautiful verse of the *Rig Veda*, it is said :

“इमां धियं शिक्षमाणस्य देव
क्रतुं दक्षं वरुण सं शिशाधि।”

O' (All-pervading Source of Light! Sharpen the intelligence, wisdom and insight of him who is striving for enlightenment.)

The pursuit of Truth is indeed the driving force behind human creativity, discovery, invention and innovation. It provides the *raison d'etre* for science and for religion.

True education enables an individual to discover his or her own innate potential. It nurtures and develops our skills and talents through rigorous training and discipline. It is not merely learning by rote. It is the training to think objectively and in a rational manner; it is a process through which we equip ourselves with the tools to analyse, comprehend and in turn contribute to the accumulated store of knowledge. It builds character and helps us to participate as productive individuals in society. It enables us to be confident and self-reliant citizens. It inculcates humility in the individual and prepares the seeker for the long journey of life.

It is said in the *Hitopadesa* :

“विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद्याति पात्रताम्।
पात्रत्वाद्धनमाप्नोति धनाद्धर्मं ततः सुखम्॥”

(Knowledge induces humility [from awareness of the greatness and vastness of Truth]; humility confers eligibility for responsibility, recognition and reward).

The same sentiment is expressed in Christian thought in the Gospel according to Saint Mathew: "Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth."

In its noblest and pristine form, learning and knowledge represent a striving for Truth.

The Union Christian College is a landmark institution which was established in accordance with the great Christian tradition of dissemination of knowledge and modern education in India. The distinguishing feature, however, was that unlike other similar initiatives, the UCC represented an entirely Indian effort. It was a band of young and enthusiastic sons of Kerala who set up this institution with the principle objective of 'Service to Society' as a whole. A related goal was to promote unity within the Christian community and indeed amongst all communities, Christians and non-Christians alike, irrespective of caste, creed or religious distinction.

This institution became known for its work in fostering awareness amongst the youth about India's rich pluralistic traditions, our common cultural and spiritual heritage and the underlying unity of our society. This work is of abiding relevance. It is essential to strengthen and further enhance awareness about India's ancient culture of oneness, synthesis, assimilation and harmony encompassing people of all religions, castes, creeds, regions and races. Our educational institutions have an important role to play in making us more aware both of our own immediate environment and traditions as well as those of our neighbours and indeed of India as a whole.

I recall Gandhiji's message of unity to your college, during his visit on 17 January 1934. He spoke about the evil of untouchability. In his speech he said: "There should be not only no untouchability as between Hiindus and Hindus ... (but) ... there should be no untouchability whatsoever between Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans, Parsis and the rest." Bapu's message is of great importance to our society and all of us must abide by it.

The electrifying presence of Gandhiji during his earlier visit to the UCC in 1925, was referred to by Malcolm Muggeridge, a

teacher in your college who later became an eminent literary personality and editor of *Punch* in England, in his 'Chronicles of Wasted Time'. He wrote : "A visit to the college by Gandhiji in the course of a tour of Travancore gave great impetus to the Swarajist sentiments among the students and the staff. I went down to the railway station to see him arrive. A vast crowd of at least 10,000-strong had already assembled there... He addressed the students. ... They then jumped up and down shouting 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai, Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai', ... they were transformed... it was nationalism that enthused them." We are all proud of the participation by the students of this college in our freedom struggle.

While the college played an important role in inculcating awareness of India's great heritage, it also opened a door to the positive influences of Western civilization. With an international faculty, an attempt was made to create an atmosphere where there was an intermingling of both Eastern and Western cultures.

It is interesting to observe that around the time that this College was founded in Kerala, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore had launched a great experiment in Santiniketan. During a visit to the Union Christian College in 1922, Gurudev referred to his philosophy behind Viswa Bharati and its relevance to other educational institutions in India. He said : "India must be saved ... by revealing the best gift which she carries hidden in her heart. This must be revealed to the world and to herself... When the doors are shut and when it is dark, then we are ignored by the whole world. We must, therefore, open our doors and say to the world: 'We also have our contribution of light to make in the lamp-festival of the Continents.' You students must say to yourself, that you belong to this great land and that therefore, it is your duty to discover and reveal to the world the best that is in your country."

This great message of cross-cultural fertilization and linkages is of abiding relevance. It is more important today than ever before, as India has launched a conscious policy of globalization and integration with the world economy. This philosophy is very much in accord with what Gurudev and Bapu had said of allowing cultures of all lands to blow across our homes, while being rooted in our own culture, so that we are not blown off our feet.

The Union Christian College has made signal contributions over several decades in providing to society talented and dedicated individuals who have worked untiringly for the national objectives of peace, freedom and prosperity. It has produced independent and productive citizens who have made lasting contributions to national reconstruction and development.

On this occasion, when we celebrate 75 glorious years of the UCC, we should also plan for the future. I am sure that all of you, students and professors, alumni and well-wishers of this college are already actively engaged in this task.

I would like to stress only two aspects. First, please strengthen your work and activities in support of our secular and democratic traditions. Our society is resilient and strong. Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency. It is incumbent upon all of us to strengthen the democratic pluralism and oneness on which our society is based.

As we prepare to enter the next century, I believe that institutions such as yours, should continue to evolve and keep pace with changing times and developments. There are today immense opportunities for our youth in diverse sectors. The inherent talent, skills and training of our people are well matched to give us our rightful place in the global economy. We can assist in this process by identifying the areas in which India has a comparative advantage by focusing on educational development and training in some of them. I am referring in particular to areas such as information technology, in which our professionals have built up an enviable reputation throughout the world.

Importance of Sports in National Health

I HAVE IMMENSE pleasure in associating myself with this important function which will herald a new chapter in the sports

life of this beautiful city of Kochi, and indeed of Kerala as a whole. I would like to congratulate all those who have toiled over many months for building this sports stadium. With its state-of-the-art facilities, this complex will offer tremendous opportunities for both sports players and spectators.

Kerala has given to the nation world-class sports persons. P.T. Usha, Shiny Wilson, M.D. Valsamma, Wilson Cherian, T.C. Yohannan, M.D. Suresh Babu, Radhakrishnan, the late Jimmy George and several other women and men from Kerala have won kudos and accolades for India in national and international events. The contribution made by this State to the games of football and volleyball in particular, is recognized throughout the country.

I personally have a great interest in sports and athletics. In fact, many decades ago, as a University student, athletics, rowing and swimming were my passion. To this day I remain an avid spectator of these and other games.

Sports and games are an essential part of the social and cultural life of our people. India has a great and age-old tradition of physical training and sport. Our ancient gurus and seers laid a lot of emphasis on the need for a healthy body which was a prerequisite for a healthy mind. It is said in a beautiful verse of *Atharva Veda* connected with the aspiration for physical well-being:

“वाङ्म आसन्नसोः प्राणश्चक्षुरक्ष्णोः श्रोत्रं कर्णयोः ।
अपलिताः केशा अशोणा बहु बाह्वोर्बलम् ॥
उर्वोरोजो जङ्घयोर्जवः पादयोः ।
प्रतिष्ठा अरिष्टानि मे सर्वात्मानिभृष्टः ॥”

(May I have voice in my mouth, breath in my nostrils,
Sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears, hair that has not turned grey,
teeth that have not decayed,
And great strength in my arms
May I have power in my thighs, swiftness in my legs, steadfastness
in my feet,
May all parts of my body be operational and my soul unimpaired).

The elaborate system of Yoga, which laid the foundation for spiritual quest by maintaining a healthy body and hence a healthy

mind, has now become widespread throughout the world. It provides for calm and harmony in modern life amidst its tensions and difficulties.

Our traditional sports such as wrestling, kabaddi, kho-kho, body-building, weight-lifting, boat-racing and others have contributed to our social and cultural lives over generations. Our epics speak of the great physical prowess of heroes such as Balram and Bhim.

Kerala is famous for its martial arts *Kalaripayat* — and for its snake boat-race, which require a high degree of physical fitness, agility and training. The fame of the snake boat-race during Onam has spread far and wide and visitors from all over the country and abroad travel to Kerala to witness this magnificent sport.

In more recent times, cricket, hockey, football and volleyball have emerged as the most popular games throughout the nation.

There are several dimensions to these activities, each of which in its own way is very important. The first relates to sports as a means of acquiring fitness and agility of the human body. The development of a sports culture, where our citizens, particularly the youth, develop an interest in being physically fit and in outdoor activities, is an important objective for society. Sports activities also foster team spirit, develop a feeling of camaraderie, instill physical courage and fearlessness and otherwise, develop the personality of our younger citizens.

I am glad to observe that the need for physical fitness is increasingly being recognized by all sections of our society. Such an approach will not only stand the individual in good stead, it will also contribute to better efficiency at the work-place. Several organizations in fact attach a lot of importance to physical training as a means of improving and enhancing productivity.

Much like the arts or the sciences, there is an important aesthetic dimension associated with sports. Sport is like a work of art. The pleasure of watching a perfectly executed dive, or the joy of witnessing the rhythm, speed and motion of a runner is not

unlike the satisfaction derived from listening to divine music or watching a beautiful dance. As in every sphere of human endeavour, the pursuit of excellence in sports, brings its own rewards to the performer and of course to the spectator.

Linked to this striving for perfection is the competitive dimension of sports. Though we are a vast nation where there is no dearth of skills and talents, we have unfortunately not produced many international champions. While it is the playing of the game which is more important than winning, the joy and pride of the nation would be magnified several times if our sportspersons were to win more medals, specially in international competitions.

It is for the experts to analyse the causes for our present lacklustre performance and propose remedies. Whether it is lack of physical infrastructure and training facilities or inadequate psychological preparation and development of the 'will to win', we must strive harder to surmount these obstacles. The construction of facilities such as those represented by this splendid stadium, will go some distance in preparing our young girls and boys for competitive sports.

Our banks and companies are also in the forefront of providing encouragement, incentives and job opportunities for sports persons. If we are to encourage international standards of excellence, it is necessary to improve our schemes of providing jobs and employment opportunities to promising individuals, so that they dedicate themselves fully to the rigours of training and discipline which competitive sports demand. This would also enable them to enlist the support of their families and friends, a factor which is essential for encouraging youngsters with potential to come forward and enter the world of sports.

As more stadia come up in different parts of the country, a significant impetus will be provided to our efforts to nourish and nurture a sporting culture in our people. Equally, it is important to encourage sports training in schools and colleges, which would also assist in identifying children with skills and abilities for sports. They can then be given special training in the field in which they

excel. The slogan for our sports administrators should be “catch them young”.

Sports represent something much more than mere individual or collective endeavour in games of skill. Sporting events, festivals and championships play a major role in contributing to national unity and integration. Furthermore, they strengthen links between people in different countries and thereby foster international friendship and cooperation. In one of his letters to Chief Ministers written in 1951, after India hosted the First Asian Games, Panditji said: “The games were interesting, but what was even more pleasing was the way these groups mixed with one another and lived together in the stadium village in friendly comradeship. I am sure that these games have served a useful purpose in adding to the friendly understanding between different peoples of Asia.”

India has had the honour of organizing and participating in several international sporting competitions. I recall in 1983, when India again hosted the Asian Games, the entire country was brimming with excitement and enthusiasm. Our players have participated to the best of their abilities in these and other championships. Many have won medals.

This year we will send our national contingent to the Olympic Games in Atlanta, USA. Our athletes are engaged in preparing themselves for the various events with dedication and devotion. Let us wish them all success. With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Kochi Sports Stadium and dedicating it to the people of India and particularly our youth.

Goa — A Tapestry of Interwoven Cultures

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to associate myself with this important event in the cultural life of Goa. The people and Government

of Goa deserve to be commended for the construction of this impressive Complex which houses the State Museum.

Goa represents a magnificent tapestry of interwoven cultures and traditions. Here, the great civilizations of the East and the West have intermingled to produce a composite culture. The diverse strands of this ethos, which have flourished and evolved in your hospitable environment, have come together in a harmonious blend reflecting a deep-rooted unity and oneness.

The challenge before this Museum is to present this splendid heritage in a manner which educates and informs the public, arouses interest and curiosity and kindles the imagination of the people. A museum is not merely a repository of antiques and artefacts. Nor is it, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said, a place which is visited only by scholars or Museum Directors. Rather, it is a symbol of our living and vibrant heritage. It should capture the spirit of the past and relate it to contemporary society in the language, idiom and forms of the present. It should demonstrate the evolution and development of our society through the vicissitudes of time. In doing so, it will promote national integration and strengthen the strong roots of our people in our ethos.

In a speech which he delivered at the opening of the National Art Gallery in Madras on 27 November 1951, Panditji had eloquently defined the purpose of a museum thus:

“A museum which is really meant to interest and educate must be something which connects its objects with the things the visitors are used to seeing in their lives and in their environments. It should not be just a symbol of the distant, unconnected past.”

The brief glimpse which I have obtained of this Museum makes me confident that you will succeed in fulfilling Panditji's exhortation. This State Museum is already in possession of some fine and valuable works of art and archaeology. You have an excellent numismatics collection, ancient manuscripts and sculptures. The various galleries which focus on different aspects of our heritage have mounted attractive displays.

With your state-of-the-art facilities, which include an audio-visual unit, a reference library, a photo laboratory and an auditorium, this Museum Complex is well placed to become a focal point for cultural activities in Goa. You may also wish to enlist the support of the private sector and industry, voluntary organizations and, particularly, academic institutions, including schools, in your activities. I am confident that your on-going programmes and ambitious plans for the future will enable this Complex to attract large numbers of Indian and foreign visitors.

Before concluding, I would like to make two suggestions for your consideration. First, you may wish to consider including a gallery devoted to contemporary art, in this Complex. This would provide encouragement to artists, particularly those who are young and less well-known. Second, I would urge you to consider dedicating one gallery in this Museum, to the magnificent struggle for the liberation of Goa. Today, 18 June, is a very significant day in our history. Fifty years ago, this day marked the beginning of the last stage of Goa's freedom struggle. It was a saga of sacrifice and selfless service to the cause of the Motherland. It is essential to inform the present generation and particularly the youth of our country, about this glorious phase of our contemporary history, and the values and the ideals which sustained our struggle.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Goa State Museum Complex and I wish it all success in the years ahead.

Message of Lord Buddha for Progress of the World

IT GIVES ME immense joy to be present in Sarnath, where great seers and savants meditated upon spiritual and temporal issues relating to the life of man. It is from this soil that Lord Buddha's

message to humanity of peace and goodwill radiated into the world. It enriched our ancient ethos and imparted resilience to our civilization and culture. His eternal message has inspired mankind through the ages.

The values preached by Lord Buddha, of *karuna* (compassion), service to humanity, equality and respect for human dignity — universal values — form the strong moral and ethical basis of our society, of our nationhood and our identity. These were the defining principles of our freedom struggle. These values are sanctified in our national emblem, Ashoka's Lion Capital, the symbol of our sovereignty. The four lions facing the four directions represent the message of India to the world. The wheel of life, law and truth, the Dharmachakra, adorns our national flag which is revered by all.

I welcome this opportunity to come to Sarnath, the land sanctified by the First Sermon of Lord Buddha and to mingle and interact with scholars and students of Buddhist philosophy. I am glad to learn that the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies has revived the traditional Buddhist methods of education. I am told that you have introduced the system of learning by rote of certain basic Buddhist texts and that an integral part of the training here is based on the ancient methods of 'Shashtrārtha' or debate which sharpens and refines the intellectual capabilities of students and seekers of knowledge. I extend my warm congratulations to all those who are being recognized at this Convocation for their wisdom and learning and for their scholarly research and insights into the diverse facets of Buddhist philosophy.

The theme I would like to dwell upon today, is the abiding relevance of the Buddha's philosophy. Indeed, the more I think and the more I read the discourses of Lord Buddha, the more I discover their meaning, depth and relevance to our contemporary lives and society. The Tathagata's message is important not merely for individual conduct, or even for the interaction between man and man. It is of vital significance for our society and nation, for the governance of relations between nations, indeed, for humanity as a whole.

Sakyamuni emphasised the primacy of the mind in all man's thought and action. Right conduct could be achieved only by purifying the mind. Throughout his life he demonstrated by his conduct and the clarity of his thought that the path to self-realisation, *Nirvana*, lay through the purity of mind. The magnificent opening verses of the *Dhammapada* state:

“मनोपुबनगमा धम्मा
मनोसेथा मनोमया
मनसा चः पदुत्थेना
भास्ति व करोति व
ततो नम दुखःमनवेति
चक्कनिव वहतो पदम”

(All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind, sorrow follows him just as the wheel follows the hoof-print of the ox that draws the cart.)

The second verse states:

“मनोपुबनगमा धम्मा
मनोसेथा मनोमया
मनस चे पसन्नेना
भास्ति व करोति व
ततो नम सुख मनवेति
छायावा अनपायेनि”

(All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If he speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.)

It is important to recall the context and the times during which the Buddha preached this philosophy. It was a time when established religions had become institutionalised and had developed strong hierarchical structures based on heredity, blind belief and faith. As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has said in his *Discovery of India*:

“Buddha had the courage to attack popular religion, superstition, ceremonial and priestcraft, and all the

vested interests that clung to them. He condemned also the metaphysical and theological outlook, miracles, revelations, and dealings with the supernatural. His appeal was to logic, reason, and experience; his emphasis was on ethics, and his method was one of psychological analysis... His whole approach comes like the breath of the fresh wind from the mountains after the stale air of metaphysical speculation."

This was the context in which the Buddha propagated his philosophy of rational conduct and thought. He exhorted the people to apply the standards of reason and logic to all philosophies, ideas and practices, including his own. In the *Anguttara Nikaya* the Buddha said to the Kalama people:

“एथ तुम्हे, कालामा, मा अनुस्सवेन, मा परम्पराय, मा इतिकिराय,
मा पिटकसम्पदानेन, मा तक्कहेतु, मा नयहेतु,
मा आकारपरिवितक्केन.... मा भब्बरूपताय, मा समणो नो गरूति ।
यदा तुम्हे, कालामा, अत्तनाव जानेय्याथ- ‘इमे धम्मा अकुसला,
इमे धम्मा सायज्जा, इमे धम्मा विज्जुगरहिता, इमे धम्मा...
अहिताय दुक्खाय संतत्तन्ती
ति, अथ तुम्हे, कालामा, पजहेय्याथ ।”

(O! Kalama, do not accept any teaching [Phenomenon] merely because you have heard it from someone; or because it is sanctioned by tradition; or because you believe it to be your duty; or because it is stated in the scriptures; or by force of arguments; or because someone tells you that this is the path; or because of form or the beauty of form; or because you feel that the Sramana is your guru. O! Kalama, when you yourselves know from your own experience that certain conduct is evil, sinful, is rejected by the wise, and produces suffering and harm, then, O! Kalama, discard this conduct.)

Such was his belief in the supremacy of rational thought that he asked the people not to accept even his own teachings unquestioningly. *Shantarakshitakshita's Tatvasangraha* contains a telling verse:

“तापाच् छेदाच् च निकषात् सुवर्णमिव पंडितैः ।
परीक्ष्य पट्टचो ग्राह्यं भिक्षवो न तु गौरवात् ॥”

(Just as experts melt, beat and test gold for its purity so also, O! bhikkhus, examine my own teachings in diverse ways. Accept them only if you find them to be valid. Do not accept them without examining them simply because they are my teachings.)

The humility of Lord Buddha and the greatness of his teaching shines through these beautiful words. Only the Enlightened One, who has shed all ego and attachment, could be so humble.

The essence of Lord Buddha's philosophy is contained in and flows from the Middle Path or 'Majjhima Patipada' which he preached in his *Dharmachakra Pravartana*. Here in the sacred Deer Park of this blessed land of Sarnath, he said :

“एते ते भिक्खवे उभो अन्ते अनुपगम्म मज्झिमापटिपादा
तथागतेन अभिसम्बुद्धा चक्खुकरणी जाणकरणी
उपसमाय अभिज्जाय सम्बोधाय निब्बानाय संवत्तति ।”

(A middle path, O! bhikkhus, avoiding the two extremes, has been discovered by the Tathagata — a path which opens the eyes, and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to *Nirvana*!)

The powerful exhortation contained in this Sermon, both for individuals and for society is to avoid the imbalance and excesses that extremes entail, in every facet of life. Right conduct for an individual is the practice of moderation, balance and harmony in thought and action. As stated in the *Visuddhi Magga* :

“चतुसच्चपटिवेधाय पटिपन्नस्य योगिनो निब्बानारम्मणं अविज्जानुसयसमुग्धातकं पज्जाचक्खु सम्मादिट्ठि ।

मिच्छाहलङ्कप्पनिघातकं चेतसो निब्बान पदाभिनिरोपनं सम्मासङ्कप्पो ।

वचीदुच्चरितसमुग्धातिका मिच्छावाचाय विरति सम्मायाचा नाम ।

मिच्छाकम्मन्तसमुच्छेदिका पाणात्रिपातादिविरति सम्माकम्मन्तो नाम ।

कुहनादिउपच्छेदिका मिच्छाजीवविरति, सो सम्माआजीवो नाम ।

कोसज्जसमुच्छेदको विरियारन्भो, एस सम्मावायामो नाम ।

मिच्छासतिविनिद्धुननो चेतसो असम्मोसो सम्मासति नाम ।
मिच्छाममाधिविद्धंसिका चित्तेकगता सम्मासमाधि नाम ।”

(This Eight-Fold Path for a seeker of truth, has been described, thus : Right views will be the torch to light his way. Right aspirations will be his guide. Right speech will be his dwelling-place on the road. His gait will be straight, for it is right behaviour. His refreshments will be the right way of earning his livelihood. Right efforts will be his steps; right thoughts his breath; and right contemplation will give him the peace that follows in his foot-prints.)

Similarly, the Buddha emphasised the importance of due restraint. He said :

“चखुना संमवरो साधु
साधु सोतेना संमवरो
घनेना संमवरो साधु
साधु जीविहया संमवरो
कायना संमवरो साधु
साधु वाक्या संमवरो
मानसा संमवरो साधु
साधु सभ्भथा संमवरो
सभ्भथा संमवुतो भिखु
सब दुखः पामोसति”

(Restraint in the eye is good, good is restraint in the ear; restraint in the nose is good, good is restraint in speech; restraint in mind is good, good is restraint in all the senses. A bhikkhu restrained in all the senses is freed from all ills.)

The Buddha's message was not to shy away from evil but to endeavour to surmount it and cure it with purity.

The same philosophy was expressed in this beautiful verse of the *Dhammapada* :

“सब्बापापस्सा अकारनम
कुश्लासा उपसम्पदा
सचितापरियोदपनम
ऐतम बुद्धना साधनम”

(Not to do evil, to cultivate merit, to purify one's mind — this is the teaching of the Buddha.)

These precepts of Buddhism are relevant not merely to an individual desirous of an end to suffering and *Nirvana*, but equally for the progress and prosperity of society as a whole. For a nation, the Middle Path or the avoidance of extremes, enjoins the pursuit of a political process based on dialogue, cooperation and mutual accommodation. It involves a striving for consensus and for the greatest good of the largest number. It calls for democratic discussion and debate based on rational thought and logic to arrive at agreement on issues which concern society at large.

In a truly prescient discourse of enduring values to the Bhikkhus contained in the *Mahaparinibanna Sutta*, the Buddha elaborated what can surely be said to be the most profound articulation of the basis for a democratic society. I wish to quote a passage from this address which I feel is particularly important to all of us as we endeavour to achieve progress on the democratic path. Every thought in this passage is full of significant meaning and worthy of careful understanding, analysis and application.

“यावकींव च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू अभिण्हं सन्निपाता
सन्निपाताबहुला भविस्सन्ति...

“यावकींव च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू समग्गा सन्निपतिस्सन्ति
समग्गा

वुट्ठहिस्सन्ति समग्गा सङ्घकरणीयानिकरिस्सन्ति,...

“यावकींव च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू अपज्जत्तं न पज्जपेस्सन्ति”
पज्जत्तं न समुच्छिन्दिस्सन्ति, यथा पज्जत्तेसु सिक्खपदेसु
समादाय वत्तिस्सन्ति...।

यावकीवं च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू ये ते भिक्खू थेरा रत्तज्जू
चिरपब्बजिता सङ्घपरिणायका ते सक्कारिस्सन्ति
गरुं करिस्सन्ति मानेस्सन्ति पूजेस्सन्ति तेसं च सोतब्बं
मज्जिस्सन्ति...।

“यावकीवं च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू उप्पननाय तण्हाय
पोनोब्भविकाय न वसं गच्छिस्सन्ति...।

“यावकीवं च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू आरज्जकेसु सेनासनेसु
सापेक्खा भविस्सन्ति...।

“यावकीवं च, भिक्खवे, भिक्खू पच्चत्तज्जेव संति उपट्ठपेस्सन्ति”
 ‘किन्ति अनागत च पेसला सब्रह्मचारी आगच्छेरूय्युं, आगता च
 पेसला सब्रह्मचारी फासु विहरेय्यु’ ति... ।
 “यावकीवं च, भिक्खवे इमें सत्त अपरिहानिया धम्मा भिक्खूमु
 ठस्सन्ति, इमेसु च सत्तसु अपरिहानियेसु धम्मेसु भिक्खू
 सन्दिस्सिस्सन्ति, बुद्धियेव, भिक्खवे, भिक्खूनं पाटिकङ्खा, नो
 परिहानि।”

(I will teach you, O bhikkhus, the conditions of welfare of a community. Listen well and I will speak. So long, O bhikkhus, as the brethren hold full and frequent assemblies, meeting in concord, rising in concord, and attending in concord to the affairs of the Sangha; so long as they, O bhikkhus, do not abrogate that which experience has proved to be good, and introduce nothing except such things as have been carefully tested; so long as their elders practise justice; so long as the brethren esteem, revere, and support their elders, and hearken unto their words; ... so long as the brethren shall not be addicted to sloth and idleness; so long as the brethren shall exercise themselves in the sevenfold higher wisdom of mental activity, search after truth, energy, joy, modesty, self-control, earnest contemplation, and equanimity of mind — so long the Sangha may be expected not to decline, but to prosper. Therefore, O bhikkhus, be full of faith, modest in heart, afraid of sin, anxious to learn, strong in energy, active in mind and full of wisdom.)

In addition to the stress on right conduct and democratic discourse, the Buddha was very firm in his belief that no absolute authority for the governance of the Sangha could be vested in any single individual. When asked by his disciples, who would lead after the Buddha, he said that it was the Dhamma, the Rule of Law which was the final authority. This precept, which is more than 2500 years old is perhaps never more valid than today. It is enshrined in our Constitution and in our vibrant institutions of democracy and is a source of constant inspiration and guidance. I have sought to give you just one example out of several, which demonstrate the deep roots of our modern nation in our ancient ethos and tradition.

This democratic approach sought to bridge and reconcile differences of opinions, even violently conflicting opinions, through

dialogue. For, as the Buddha said in the *Dhammapada*:

“न ही वेरेन वेरानि
सम्मन्तीध कुदाचनं
अवेरेन च सम्मनती
ऐसा धम्मो सनातनो”

(Enmity cannot be overcome by an inimical outlook but by the spirit of friendship. This is an Ancient Law.)

One of the most sacred tenets of the democratic way of life based on reason and logic preached by Buddhism, is that of Ahimsa, that is, non-violence, and peace. Though it was a proselytising religion, it sought to do so on the basis of a cognition of its values and principles. Indeed, the Buddhist tradition is open and respectful of different streams of thought and philosophies.

This is borne out in ample measure by the inscription on the Shahbazgarhi rock-edict established by Emperor Ashoka near present-day Peshawar, which states:

“सलवद्धि तु बहुविध,
तस तू इयो मुल यं वचगुति किति अतप्रषंडपुज
व परप्रषंडगरन व नो सिय
अपकरणसि लहुक व सिय तसि प्रकरणे,
पुजेतविय व चु परप्रषंड तेन तेन अकरने,
एवं करतं अतप्रषंड वढेति परप्रषंडंस पि च उपकरोति,
तद अथ करमिनो अतप्रषंडं क्षणति परप्रषंडंस च अपकरोति,
यो हि कचि अतप्रषंडं पुजेति परप्रषंडं
गरहति सव्रे सतप्रषडभतिय व किति अंतप्रषंडं
दिपयमि ति सो च पुन तथ करतं
सो च पुन तथ करतं बढतरं उपहंति अतप्रषंडं ॥”

{The increase of spiritual strength is of many forms. But the root is the guarding of one's speech so as to avoid the extolling of one's own religion, or to the decrying of the religion of another, or speaking lightly of it without occasion or relevance. As proper occasions arise, persons of other religions should also be honoured suitably. Acting in this manner, one certainly exalts one's own religion and also helps persons of other religions. Acting in a contrary manner, one injures one's own religion and also does disservice to the religions

of others. One who reveres one's own religion and to glorify it over all other religions, does injure one's own religion most certainly.)

I feel we should draw sustenance and inspiration from the Buddha's teachings and apply them with vigour and diligence to our own thoughts and actions.

Inherent to this approach of reason, moderation and harmony is the reverence for human dignity and love and compassion (*karuna*) for all living beings. According to the Buddha, all human beings are equal. All beings on earth are experiencing *dukkha* and all have the right to salvation, to achieve *Nirvana*. He was opposed to the caste system and the rigid hierarchical structures which became entrenched and which stifled creativity and progress and set man against man. In the *Suttanipata*, the Buddha preached that it is right conduct alone which matters and that excellence in merit is obtained by one's deeds and not by birth or caste. The same teaching is expressed in two beautiful verses of the *Dhammapada*. Lord Buddha says:

“दुरे संतो पकासंती
हिमवंतो व पब्बतो
असंतेथा न दिसंति
रतिम खीत्ता यथा सारा”

(Like the Himalayas, the good are visible even from afar; like arrows shot in the night, the wicked are not seen even though they may be near.)

“न फुप्फगंधो पतिवातमेति
न कंदनं तगरमल्लिका व
सतंक गंधो पतिवातमेति
सब्बा दिसा सप्पुरिसो पवायति”

(The scent of flowers cannot go against the wind; nor the scent of sandalwood, nor of rhododendron, nor of jasmine; only the reputation of good people can go against the wind. The reputation of the virtuous ones is wafted abroad in all directions.)

We are all familiar with the teachings of the *Jataka Tales* which are a treasure trove of wisdom and knowledge and also provide us with a wealth of information about life during the Buddhist period. The Tales illustrate in vivid detail, the manner in

which members of all castes flocked to the Buddha and sought refuge in the Dhamma. His deep commitment to equality and non-discrimination amongst human beings was also reflected in the tradition of propagating his teachings in the ordinary languages of the masses rather than in the classical language of Sanskrit which was the preserve of a small elite.

Indeed, he used the language and idiom of the common people to explain profound concepts in terms that were immediately comprehensible to the layman. The allegories, similes and proverbs relating to the daily lives of the people — the reference to the fragrance of flowers and the majesty of mountains in the *Dhammapada* is one instance — brought his philosophy very close to the people. Lord Buddha used the symbol of the simple wheel or chakra to explain the most profound precepts and eternal truths. He said that the spokes of the wheel are the rules of pure conduct; justice is the uniformity of their length; wisdom is the tire; modesty and thoughtfulness are the hub in which the immovable axle of truth is fixed.

This empathy for the under-privileged, love and compassion for all beings was also reflected in acts of kindness and charity. Merit was to be gathered by such acts. A gift was not merely charity, it was a gift according to Dhamma. It was a duty to assist others, particularly those suffering and in need. Perhaps the most famous and active follower of the teachings of the Buddha, Emperor Ashoka, established several public works throughout his empire, which improved the well-being of the people. He started water and irrigation projects and constructed hospitals and shelters, bridges and roads as part of his duty, his Dhamma. Service to humanity thus became a central element of our ethos.

We should renew and strengthen this tradition and propagate it vigorously. For, in the ultimate analysis we can progress as a nation only if we can make a difference to the lives of the poorest, the most oppressed and the downtrodden. Buddhism, in contemporary India, has struck a deep and responsive chord, and under the leadership of Babasaheb Ambedkar has become a major force for emancipation and progress in society.

The Buddha's teachings of peace and non-violence, equality and respect for human dignity exercised a profound influence on our towering leaders of this century. Bapu transformed the philosophy of Ahimsa into a powerful moral and ethical force which secured us our freedom. It resulted in the dismantling of the largest empire on earth. Pandit Nehru applied this philosophy in the international arena and won great respect for our nation and its ethos, throughout the world. He coined our policy of 'Panchsheel' which governed the conduct of relations between countries on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence, equality, mutual respect, non-aggression and non-interference in internal affairs. The concept of sovereign equality of nations and interaction on the basis of mutual respect for diverse cultures, ideologies and social systems was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The application of the yardstick of 'reason' and 'merit' to every issue of global concern became the hallmark of our policy of 'Non-alignment'.

In contemporary times, when there is growing inter-dependence and the world is being reduced to a 'global village' with instant mass communications, it is essential to remain rooted in our ethos and steadfast in preserving, protecting and enhancing our national interest and security. While remaining open to new developments in science and technology and other areas which contribute to national progress, our nation is resilient enough to withstand pressures aimed at weakening us. We must preserve in our work for peace, non-violence, disarmament and development throughout the world.

One important facet of Buddhism, which is of particular relevance to students of universities and academic institutions such as yours, is its stress on the pursuit of excellence. The institution of the Sangha injected a vitality and a dynamism into the monastic and university life of the times. This in turn exercised a profound influence on the laity. The system of education encouraged high standards of achievement not merely in spiritual and intellectual matters but also in diverse spheres of art, painting and sculptures, literature, medicine, engineering, construction and architecture. As the Lord Buddha says in the *Dhammapada*:

“कायिरा चः कायिराथेनं
 दलहमेनम परक्कमे
 सिथिलो ही परिब्बजो
 भीयो आकिरते राजमः”

(If there is anything to be done, do it well; do it firmly and energetically; for the slack life of a bhikkhu scatters much dust [of moral defilements]).

The beauty of the Ajanta paintings and cave architecture, the magnificence of the stupas here and in Sanchi or the grandeur and glory of Potala Palace in Lhasa testify to this striving for perfection. The monastic system of education gave rise to the great Universities of Nalanda, Vallabhi and Vikramshila, renowned throughout the world. The Chinese scholars Huen Tsang and Fa-hien have written extensively about the widespread influence of these institutions. The President of Vikramshila University, Dipankar Srijnana or Atisa contributed immensely to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet and supported the translation of several Buddhist works into Tibetan language. Many of these works which have been lost in the original language are preserved in Tibetan.

It is our collective duty to preserve and protect this glorious heritage. This Institute with its students, scholars and teachers is engaged in this noble task. If I may say so, you are continuing the tradition of a great statesman, scholar and socialist, deeply influenced by Buddhist philosophy, Acharya Narendra Deva. His much-admired work, *Bauddha Dharma Darshan*, in Hindi, dealt with all aspects of Buddhist thought in clear and simple terms. His translation of the French version of Vastubandhu's *Abhidharma Kosh* is an important contribution to the spread of the Buddha's precepts amongst the people. Your Institute has conducted valuable research into ancient Buddhist texts, the repositories of great knowledge and wisdom. Your translations of Tibetan texts into other languages have been widely acclaimed. I am glad that the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies is playing an invaluable role in preserving Tibetan culture and Buddhist thought. Your plans to start new courses on Tibetan medicine and astronomy and to establish a

museum on Tibetan arts and crafts will go a long way in keeping alive this ancient tradition.

One area where I would encourage you to direct your endeavours is to enhance our understanding of both the exoteric and esoteric aspects of Buddhism. It is the mystical aspects of the teachings of Lord Buddha, many of which form an integral part of Tibetan Buddhism which require to be analysed, translated into different languages and presented in simple terms to the people. The preparation of commentaries on the diverse strands of Buddhist philosophy would add immensely to our understanding of the content, practice and understanding of Buddhist precepts in various countries.

Before concluding, I would like to stress what Bapu said about the Buddha's message in *Young India* of 24 November 1927:

“Buddha's teaching, like his heart, was all-expanding and all-embracing, and so it has survived his own body and swept across the face of the earth.”

Like the apostles of the Buddha, the messengers of Ashoka and the roaring lions of Sarnath, I would urge all of you to propagate Lord Buddha's message of *Bahujanahitaya* and *Bahujanasukhaya*, of peace, harmony and brotherhood between man and man, nation and nation and peoples of the world.

It is with deep humility that I accept the honour which you have bestowed upon me today.

Role of Teachers in India

IT ALWAYS GIVES me immense pleasure to participate in this function on Teachers' Day which is a very special occasion for several reasons. It is on this day that the nation recalls the dedicated service of countless teachers throughout the country, who are

engaged in building and strengthening the moral and ethical foundations of our society. By celebrating Teachers' Day on the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, we also pay tribute to the memory of a great scholar and statesman and an outstanding representative of the teaching fraternity.

I personally have been associated with the sphere of education for over sixty years — in different capacities — as a student, as a teacher, Education Minister, Chief Minister, Governor, Vice-President and President. I am aware of the difficult and complex nature of the duties of teachers, the constraints they have to cope with and the severe strain on them. Equally, I am aware of the great difference a good and dedicated teacher can make to the lives of those in his care.

I would, therefore, like warmly to congratulate all those teachers who have received the National Awards today. Their contribution to the cause of high-quality education has been recognized and to my mind this is a signal honour.

The distinction achieved by national award-winning teachers draws attention to the role of teachers in India. Our society has always attached the highest value to learning, scholarship and wisdom. In our national tradition, our seers and teachers are deeply respected and even venerated for their knowledge. One of our scriptures states:

“गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु गुरुर्देवोमहेश्वरः
गुरुःसाक्षात्परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः”

The same message is contained in this exhortation of the *Taitreya Upanishad*:

“आचार्यदेवो भव।”

Indeed, in our culture, the role of teacher is so significant that he is even held responsible for the sins committed by his students:

“शिष्यं पापं गुरुं ब्रजेत।”

In medieval times this respect for our teachers was propagated in the songs of Sant Kabirdas. In a beautiful verse he said:

“गुरु गोविन्द दोऊ खड़े, काके लागूं पाए।
बलिहारी गुरु आपनो, गोविन्द दियो बताय ॥”

(Lord Govind himself has directed that obeisance be paid to the guru as in order to reach Govind, you first need the guru as a guide to divinity.)

I have recounted these teachings of our civilization briefly to illustrate the importance, in our tradition, of the role of the teacher. And indeed, we should revere our teachers, not merely because our tradition enjoins this upon us but with the awareness of their vital role in instilling moral and ethical values in society and in the formation of national character.

Our concept of the ideal role of a teacher gives primacy to building a society with high moral and ethical standards. Teachers are gurus and *acharyas* who teach by their conduct and action. They do not merely transmit information. They forge bonds of friendship and trust with their students and by force of their personality and behaviour exercise a profound influence on them. As Bapu said in ‘To the Students’:

“I have found that boys (children) imbibe more from the teacher’s own lives than they do from the books they read to them or the lectures that they deliver to them with their lips.”

I deeply believe that many of the ills that plague our society can be removed only with the building of national character. The more I reflect on the problems we face as a nation, the more I am convinced that it is only the strengthening of our national character by adhering to the eternal values of our ethos and by inculcating a scientific temper and a modern, progressive outlook, which will lead us forward on the path of progress and prosperity.

The challenge before our society today and particularly for our teachers is to equip our students for the requirements of contemporary life by inculcating the timeless values of our civilization. The

goal of our teachers should be to provide meaningful education. As Swami Vivekananda had said:

“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect expanded, and by which one can stand up on one’s own feet.”

A major responsibility devolves upon the teacher to achieve this overall harmonious development of the personality of the student. It is the teacher who inculcates the values and ideals of our ethos — truth, compassion, humanism, ahimsa, service and dignity of labour — in the younger generation. He initiates his disciples into the pleasures of the intellect by sharpening and training the mind in logic and reason. It is again the teacher who arouses the curiosity of the student in matters spiritual and temporal.

An important task before a teacher is to awaken the enormous potential lying dormant in every student in the diverse facets of his or her personality — physical, intellectual, artistic and creative. As Swami Vivekananda said:

“Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.”

By suggestion and guidance, teachers refine and develop the finer sensibilities of the impressionable minds of young disciples. they assist, advise and equip the student with the culture, capability and knowledge required to lead a life of balance and harmony between body and soul, between man and nature and between individual and society. Teachers thus can and should play a vital role in the moral and ethical rejuvenation of the younger generation and hence of society as a whole. Teachers must nurture patriotic, progressive and productive citizens, proud of our country, steeped in its pluralistic and secular ethos, aware of their responsibilities and duties to society and eager to contribute to and participate fully in the life of our nation.

While it is important for us to draw sustenance from our ethos, it is also important to be open to new ideas and learn from the experience of other societies. Such an eclectic approach is enjoined by our tradition thus:

“आ नो भद्राः कृतवो यन्तु विश्वतः”

(Let noble and positive influences come from all sides.)

We should keep abreast of the new developments in science and technology and the significant advances in the diverse spheres of human endeavour taking place throughout the world. It is, therefore, essential for our teachers to constantly upgrade and enhance their skills and abilities. Proper training and research in modern methods of teaching, particularly those involving the use of computers and information technology, is necessary. This will assist our students in keeping pace with the requirements of the new information age. Exchanges amongst teachers from different regions of the country through seminars, workshops and training courses would enrich their experience and enable teachers to enhance and improve the quality of their work.

If India is to prosper and grow strong, it is essential to strengthen our efforts in the field of education, particularly, primary education. A significant component of this effort must be an improvement in the working conditions and the emoluments of teachers. These should be commensurate with their great responsibilities and the efforts that they are required to make.

More important than the material requirements is, however, the need to respect our teachers and their contribution to society. Each one of us must treat our teachers with the utmost respect and honour. The greater the level of respect for our teachers, the higher will be the good that will come to the nation by the success of her children and youth. This is the message of our ethos, and needs to be reiterated now in the modern period as we face the challenge and opportunities of the 21st century.

We have honoured some of our outstanding teachers today. I join the nation in paying tribute to them for their glorious work in the service of our people. Let us all extend our complete support to our teachers who are making an invaluable contribution in strengthening the moral and ethical foundations of our society and in promoting progress and prosperity.

Literacy Is a Key to Self-discovery

I AM HAPPY to associate myself with the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Literacy Day. At the very outset, I would like to congratulate all those who have won awards in the painting, poster and essay competition. Such events play an important role in creating awareness amongst our people for the spread of literacy. I also extend my felicitations to the districts of Belgaum in Karnataka and Dumka in Bihar, which have been recognized for their splendid work in the promotion of literacy. I am sure other districts will draw inspiration from these successes and follow their example.

This anniversary provides an opportunity to renew our commitment to eradicating illiteracy, a complex problem which is compounded by the inexorable increase in population and the attendant ills of poverty and underdevelopment. We must pledge, both individually and collectively as a nation, to do everything possible to promote literacy and provide for a more meaningful life for our people. As the beautiful saying ‘दीपेन दीपं’ teaches us, let each one of us light the lamp of literacy and let every lamp light another. Thus, if each educated person in our society pledges to make at least one person literate, I am confident that we will make rapid strides towards achieving our goal.

Our tradition has always attached the highest value to literacy, education and knowledge. This is reflected in the ‘Upanayana Sanskara’ which symbolizes the opening of the “third eye”, the eye of knowledge and of the intellect. The *Rig Veda*, the most ancient of all the Vedas states:

“उत त्वः पश्यन्न ददर्श वाचमुत त्वः शृण्वन्न शृणेत्येनाम्।”

(Those who are ignorant, have ears, but they hear not. They have

eyes, but they see not. They have the tongue in the mouth, but they speak not.)

The same message was propagated by the great saint Thiruvalluvar in his immortal *Kural*, many centuries ago. He said:

“Numbers and letters, the wise declare, are eyes to live with”.

In recent times, Bapu, the Father of our Nation, had stressed the need to make our population literate. Writing in *Harijan* on 22 June 1940, Bapu had said: “Mass illiteracy is India’s sin and shame and must be liquidated.”

I have recounted this message from our ethos in order to illustrate the importance of literacy and education for self-discovery and realization of one’s innate potential. Our people, many of whom may be unlettered, are nevertheless deeply rooted in our tradition which reveres learning. They are steeped in the wisdom of our civilization. The epics and stories of the past which have been transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, are an integral part of the lives of our people. The challenge before us is to build upon and derive insights from this great heritage and use it to promote literacy and education in contemporary times. When the National Literacy Mission was launched in 1988, it was stressed that this programme should link our heritage, our time-old traditions and our culture with literacy and that it should link us more strongly with our roots and our heritage. Indeed, this aspect was deemed to be one of the most important parts of the programme.

I believe that an essential pre-requisite for success, even greater success, in achieving our goal is to make literacy a felt need of the people. Our people must demand literacy and treat it as a necessity of life. We must create an awareness that life is incomplete and is not fully meaningful until each and every individual in our society is, at the very least, literate.

It must be convincingly projected to the people that the knowledge of the three R’s can and does improve their lives in a significant and tangible manner, and that it equips them with basic practical skills and learning which enables them to stand on their own feet,

makes them self-reliant and opens new opportunities. It must be demonstrated to the people that with literacy, all social indicators of the quality of life improve — children's health, family welfare and status of women; people become aware of and far more receptive to various development schemes and policies which improve their well-being.

Education should be viewed as a means of empowerment and as a measure for preventing the exploitation of the weaker sections of society. Furthermore, it should be seen as contributing to making justice more easily accessible to the poor and the deprived. Above all, literacy is a catalyst for developing self-confidence, self-esteem and pride in oneself. For the nation as a whole, it nurtures better citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities to society. Indeed, it imparts fuller meaning to our systems of democratic governance and people's participation.

An effective way of motivating the people to participate in the movement for literacy is to tailor the schemes and programmes to their specific requirements and needs. It is essential to transmit the message of literacy in the language and specific cultural idioms and forms of the various regions. This calls for a subtle strategy whose core thrust is uniform throughout the country — the teaching of the three R's — but which is flexible enough to adapt itself to the circumstances and conditions prevailing in different regions. The vast reach of the audio-visual media also offers significant opportunities, which I am glad to observe, are being effectively utilized. Once we have aroused interest and generated enthusiasm among the people, and there is a groundswell in the demand for literacy, more than half the battle is already won. Thereafter, we face the relatively easier task of providing the infrastructural facilities required for effective implementation of the programme.

Our constitutional and legal provisions as well as the policies and schemes of the Government, both at the Centre and in the States and Union Territories, have already created the framework in which mass literacy programmes can be implemented. This framework should be utilized effectively and efforts, particularly under the aegis of the National Literacy Mission, should burgeon into a vast

nation-wide social movement, a crusade involving all sections of the society — the Government, voluntary organizations, the private sector and above all the people. It is only through collective and united efforts that we can translate our national commitments into reality.

The Panchayati Raj institutions, which form an integral part of our Constitutional framework relating to participative democracy can and should play an essential role in the literacy movement. Recent measures which have strengthened these institutions, particularly by providing for a much greater participation of women, present a valuable opportunity to give a further impetus to our literacy campaigns. Women elected to Panchayats are opinion-makers and their support would elicit a much better response from women and children of the villages to the campaigns. I am glad that the National Literacy Mission has specially targeted women as active participants, an approach which has yielded rich dividends. It has promoted positive social change. For instance, I am told, the movement for prohibition in Andhra Pradesh which began as a women's movement in Nellore, has its origins in the effective implementation of the literacy campaign in that district.

The National Literacy Mission has built up a corps of dedicated and committed volunteers who have taken up the cause of literacy with a crusading zeal. The nation is proud of their selfless and voluntary service. Indeed, such is their dedication, that the successful implementation of several other social development programmes depends on the assistance, support and participation of the volunteers of the National Literacy Mission. I am referring to the Pulse Polio Immunization campaign which was carried to remote villages and hamlets by literacy workers. I would like to congratulate them for their achievements and wish them all success in their endeavours.

What began as a small movement in Ernakulam district of Kerala is today a people's movement, which encompasses all sections of society. We should draw inspiration from the experience of the States of Kerala and Pondicherry and the districts of Burdwan and Midnapore in West Bengal, which have been declared fully literate. An analysis of these success stories may well provide useful lessons and insights for our efforts in other States, which

have lagged behind. Even in States and districts where we have made rapid progress, we cannot afford to be complacent. We must ensure that the needs of neo-literates for reading material, including books, magazines and newspapers are fully met. Their special requirements should be taken into account while developing this pool of literature, which should be presented in an interesting manner. More important, vigorous efforts are required to ensure that there is no relapse into illiteracy.

I am confident that the National Literacy Mission will achieve its objective of making one hundred million people literate by the year 1999. The impressive effort, commitment and dedication which has been displayed by everyone associated with this cause, augurs well for achieving our goal of becoming a fully literate society by the year 2005. We must all work unitedly towards this end.

Adi Sankaracharya — Seer of All Times

IT IS A great honour for me to participate in this function to unveil the statue of Adi Sankaracharya, one of the great seers of our civilization, indeed, of all civilizations and of all times. To do so in Mokshapuri, the City of Deliverance, where Adi Sankaracharya consecrated the Sri Chakra before Goddess Kamakshi, and in the benign presence of the Sankaracharyas, is a great blessing. The Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, under the spiritual guidance of the venerable Sankaracharyas has contributed in abundant measure over the ages, to the moral and social uplift of our people. I pay my deepest respects and tributes to the revered *swamigals*.

To understand the timeless philosophy of Sankara *Advaita* and its enduring relevance to humanity, it is essential to appreciate the

context and the circumstances in which this message was propagated. It was a time when society was riven by division and dissent. It was fragmented and there was no unity of thought or spirit. Conflicting ideas and philosophies were engendering suspicion and distrust amongst man and man and religion and religion. The old Vedic religion was encountering problems and suffering from distortions. It is at such a time that young Sankara preached his philosophy of unity and oneness, of *Advaita*, the indescribable Absolute — that is Brahma.

This was not a new philosophy, since it was based on our ancient scriptures. As the Upanishads have said in this glorious hymn:

“ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥”

(That is full and infinite; this is full and infinite. The full comes out of the full. Taking the full from the full the full itself remains.)

What was remarkable, however, was the new insight and interpretation provided by Sankara which revolutionized human thought, generated dynamic and lasting forces of integration and stability in society and provided an environment for peaceful and harmonious progress.

Sankara's profound philosophy radiated the eternal truth that *Brahman* and *Jiva* are one and the same. He taught that all men, irrespective of caste or creed can experience Reality by lifting the veil of *Maya* and *Avidya* which surrounds man. He preached that there were diverse paths to truth. Indeed, Sankaracharya gave new meaning to these dictums of the *Rig Veda* and the *Bhagwad Gita*:

“एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधावदन्ति”

(Truth is one, the sages describe it variously.)

“ये यथा माम् प्रपद्यन्ते
तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः
पार्थ सर्वशः ॥”

(However, men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the paths men take from every side are Mine)

The same message shines forth in this *shloka*:

“यो यो यां तनुं भक्तः
श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां
तामेव विदधाम्यहम्”

(Any devotee who seeks to worship with faith any aspect, I verily strengthen the faith of that individual in his own creed.)

The paths of Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Jnanayoga, indeed all paths, were proclaimed to be valid approaches to the *Brahman*. Sankara himself epitomized all these approaches. He was a *karmayogi* since his life was devoted to the cause of spiritual and social uplift of humanity. In his divine composition *Bhaja Govindam* he urged the people to follow the righteous path of good moral conduct thus:

“नेयं सज्जनसंगे चिन्तं देयं देयं दीनजनाय च वित्तम्॥”

(Turn the mind to the company of the good;
give away your wealth to the needy.)

As a *Parivarjaka*, an itinerant traveller throughout the length and breadth of our country, he propagated his message of peace and harmony, oneness and unity, equality and brotherhood. The very core of his philosophy which stressed the identity between Brahman and Jiva meant that all human beings were equal. There was divinity in all.

This Upanishadic dictum well sums up the philosophy of Sankara:

“ब्रह्मविद्यायाः फलं सर्वभावापत्ति”

(The realization of Brahman leads to identity with all.)

The propagation and explanation of our philosophy of *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Tat Tvam asi* by Sankara inspired the people and imparted a new confidence amongst them, irrespective of their

position or status in society. Many of you are familiar with the famous encounter of the *chandala* and Sankara on way to the Vishwanath Temple in Benaras. When the *chandala* was requested by disciples to move away from Sankara's path, the *chandala* questioned who was being asked to move, the body or the soul? Sankara immediately prostrated himself before the *chandala* as he would before a guru, recognizing the divinity in every individual.

I have recounted these teachings because I believe that in order to progress more rapidly as a nation and as a people, we must give full effect to this principle of equality and mutual respect, by adhering to it in thought and action.

Sankara's *bhakti* or devotion is illumined by his lyrical writings and songs, particularly the *Bhaja Govindam*, *Viveka Chudamani*, *Saundarya Lahiri* and *Ananda Lahiri*. He was a supreme *Bhakta*, devoted to the Gita's exhortation of *Nishkaama Karm* or action without looking for the fruits of action. He was devoted to his elders. Indeed, he broke tradition to perform the last rites of his beloved mother even though this was not permitted to a *sanyasin*. Above all, he was devoted to the Divine Spirit. In a verse attributed to Sankara, devotion is identified as one of the most important means to divinity:

“मोक्ष कारण समग्रयां भक्तिर एव गरीयसी
स्व रूपरूपानुसन्धानम भक्तिर इति अभिधीयत”

(Devotion to the Supreme is the most important factor
which contributes to spiritual liberation.)

In modern times, our younger generation needs to be reminded about these values of our ethos — to respect elders and teachers, men of wisdom and our parents, and to pursue the path of right conduct and action without constantly hankering after material benefit, which is illusory and ephemeral.

Perhaps, it is the path of *Jnana* or knowledge which is most closely associated with Sankara. A man of brilliant intellect, a profound thinker, he ranks with the greatest minds across time and space. He discovered, several centuries ago, what modern science has discovered only in the 20th century after the splitting of the atom,

namely, that matter and energy are interconvertible and that matter is, in fact, compressed energy. The concept of primal energy was envisaged by Sankara in his doctrine of *Anu* and *Anna* as well as in the *Shabda Brahman* which was manifested as vibrations, sound energy and *Shakti*. So vital was the role of *Jnana* for achieving *Brahman*, that Sankara said in the *Bhaja Govindam*:

“कुरुते गंगासागरगमनं
व्रतपरिपालनमथवा दानम् ।
ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन
मुक्तिं नः भजति जनमशतेन ॥”

(One may go on pilgrimage to the place where the Ganga joins the sea; or observe the religious vows with care or offers gifts. But if one be devoid of higher knowledge, *mukti* cannot be gained according to all schools of thought — even in a hundred lives.)

Through his holistic philosophy of oneness, Sankara propounded a framework within which all other philosophies could be assimilated in harmony without losing their individual identity. Diverse religions, diverse ways to the Truth, could all be contained in the all-encompassing embrace of *Advaita*. Indeed, so vast and universal was his approach that it catered to the needs of individual temperaments and personalities of seekers of Knowledge and Truth. I would like to quote a verse from the *Siva Mahimnastrotra*, quoted by Swami Vivekananda in his renowned address at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, more than one hundred years ago, which expresses this philosophy:

“रुचीनां वैचित्र्याद् ऋजु कुटिल
नाना पथ जुषां ।
नृणाम् एको गम्यस्त्वसि
पर्यसाम् अर्णव इव ॥”

(Different people have different tastes; so He is worshipped in different forms. But you are the One alone, who is to be approached by men, just as all waters have one destination, namely the ocean.)

There is no denial of other traditions in *Advaita* philosophy. Rather, there is toleration and indeed, if I may say so, a deep respect for diverse points of view and systems of thought. The contribution of Sankara was to identify and strengthen the basic underlying unity in our rich and vibrant diversity of philosophies, cultures and religious traditions. For these revolutionary efforts which met with great success, Sankara is reverentially known as the 'Sanmathaprasthapanacharya', one who established six religions, all of which in their essence, were the same.

This message is of great relevance to us today, because it tells us that all religions have the same goal. If we can translate this fundamental truth into our own actions, we will prosper and take great strides towards our goal of peace and harmony.

As I said earlier, Sankara was not merely the Enlightened One or the Supreme *Bhakta*, he was also a true *karmayogi*. He travelled throughout our country from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas and from Dwarka to Puri propagating his Universal Truth using the essentially democratic and liberal approach of discussion, debate and reconciliation or *Shashtrārtha*. Many of you would recall his famous debate with the great Mimamsa scholar Mandana Misra. At the end of the debate, Mandana Misra became a follower of Sankara, so powerful was the appeal of his philosophy.

President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in a tribute to Sankara at a civic reception in Trivandrum on 29 September 1963 said:

"Sankaracharya ... was a prophet of reconciliation in his own time, and if this spirit is preserved, he will also be a prophet of reconciliation and harmony to the whole world."

A lasting legacy of Sankara to our nation is the establishment of *Maths* in the four corners of our country which cemented our cultural and national unity. He went further and set up the practice that priests from the South would be the custodians of Badrikashram in the Himalayas. As Pandit Nehru said in his *Discovery of India*:

“He (Sankara) was evidently a man who was not only conscious of his mission, a man who looked upon the whole of India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas as his field of action and as something that held together culturally and was infused by the same spirit, though this might take many external forms. He strove hard to synthesize the diverse currents that were troubling the mind of India of his day and to build a unity of outlook out of that diversity”.

I believe one of Sankara's greatest contributions to our society is the strengthening of our national identity and oneness of India. He provided a powerful impetus to the values of toleration and mutual respect for diverse opinions and faiths. It is this approach which has imparted resilience and strength to our society. It is this approach which we have to consolidate and build upon in order to meet the challenges before us.

I am glad that the Sri Chandrashekharananda Saraswathi Vishwamahavidyalaya — a deemed University, is instituting Chairs for research and study into the philosophy of Sankara. It is essential for our nation and society to delve deep into its cultural traditions and ethos and adhere to values and ideals which have empowered our society since time immemorial. Many of these are the determinant values of our nationhood — pluralism, synthesis and oneness, democracy, equality, mutual respect and tolerance, service to society — timeless values which have become embedded in our consciousness due to the efforts of teachers like Sankara. The eclectic approach of our tradition which received strong support from them has enabled us to strengthen our roots in our culture, learn from the experience of others, assimilate it and utilize it to go forward with vigour and confidence. It stands us in good stead to cope with the challenges facing modern society.

I am confident that this great Peetham through its manifold activities will propagate the values of harmony, reconciliation, understanding and brotherhood in our society. I am thankful to the organizers for associating me with this memorable function.

Maulana Azad — Man of “Luminous Intellect”

IT ALWAYS GIVES me immense pleasure to participate in this function in memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. This event is important because it provides an opportunity for our children and youth to study and draw inspiration from the life and work of a stalwart of our freedom struggle, a renowned scholar, who was referred to by Panditji as a man of “luminous intellect”. I would like to congratulate all those who have been selected for the awards as well as everyone who participated in the Essay Competition.

Maulana Saheb was the scion of a distinguished family of Alims. His father was from the holy city of Mecca, where the Maulana was born. His mother’s father was the Mufti of Medina Munawwara. Maulana Azad accomplished the remarkable feat of completing the course of Dars-e-Nizamia at the young age of sixteen, a record which I am told has not yet been surpassed. He received acclaim and fame as a Muslim ‘divine’ with a profound knowledge and insight into Islamic philosophy and thought. His *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* to this day stands among the most erudite and learned commentaries on the Quran Shareef.

Throughout his life, Maulana Saheb derived great sustenance and solace from the teachings of the Holy Prophet. Indeed, as he said on several occasions, the philosophy of his life, his values and ideals of love and compassion, oneness and brotherhood, equality, respect and toleration for different points of view, secularism, he found in the Islamic tradition. Indeed, these are the teachings of all traditions and religions. These are the timeless values of our civilization, which have kept it aloft over the ages.

Perhaps the cause dearest to his heart, was that of Hindu-Muslim Unity. As he said in a memorable speech as President of the

Indian National Congress at the Ramgarh Session in 1940: "If Hinduism has been the religion of its (India's) people for several thousand years, Islam too, has been its religion for one thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with legitimate pride that he is an Indian and a follower of Hinduism, so a Muslim can proudly claim being an Indian and a follower of Islam... Our shared life of a thousand years has forged a common nationality."

Maulana Saheb articulated the view that Indian nationhood, her culture and civilization was a unique assimilation and synthesis of diverse traditions which had blown across the land over time and space. He believed fervently that we must preserve and enhance this eclectic approach of assimilating into our own tradition, modern ideas and thought and all that was of value from other traditions. He had said at a UNESCO seminar in Mysore on 2 November 1949 that: "India had been at her best when her doors were wide open to all who came from abroad. She freely partook of whatever lessons the world had to teach and equally freely gave the world her best."

Indeed, in his own personal life Maulana Azad was not content merely with traditional learning. He taught himself English in order to explore Western thought and philosophy. His entire approach was aimed at strengthening the Indian tradition of liberality of thought.

I am glad that the themes selected for the Essay Competition this year relate to Maulana Saheb's concept of education and culture as well as a vision of South Asia. His own personality, his life and work stand vivid testimony to his philosophy of tolerance, respect for diverse points of view and an eagerness to assimilate what is of value from other traditions. It is only by inculcating these cherished values of our civilization that we can equip our people, and specially the young generation, to face the challenges of modern society. Apart from moulding the character of our children and preparing them for a productive life as responsible citizens of society, I believe that it is this aspect which should be a core objective of our educational system. Not only will such an approach

which Maulana Saheb advocated, promote harmony and oneness in our own society but also strengthen bonds of friendship and understanding in our entire region.

Our own region of South Asia, the cradle of several of the world's great religions has sent forth the message of peace, tolerance and brotherhood throughout the world. The people of South Asia belong to the same cultural ethos. Our customs, languages and traditions are very similar. There is a wealth of affection and warmth among the peoples of these countries for each other. We should strive to strengthen and enhance our cultural bonds, build upon the commonalities and areas of agreement and provide a strong impetus for promoting peace and friendship through cultural and educational exchanges in our region. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations, an institution founded by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, is well placed to pursue this goal, so dear to the late Maulana Saheb and so essential for the prosperity and progress of the peoples of South Asia.

A.T. Ariyaratne — 'Gandhi' of Sri Lanka

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to participate in the ceremony for the presentation of the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1996 to Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne.

Today, on 1 January 1997, it is appropriate and apposite that we begin the new year recalling Mahatma Gandhi's message of Truth, Non-violence and Selfless Service. This was a message illumined by him throughout his life. It imbued his every action and inspired the masses in India to fight for the cause of righteousness, justice, equality and freedom in all its variegated dimensions. Our nation and people, indeed, all nations and peoples of the world would

do well to draw sustenance from the teachings of the Mahatma and translate them into their own lives.

Dr. Ariyaratne, known as the 'Gandhi' of Sri Lanka has demonstrated in a tangible and powerful manner how the wisdom of Bapu can result in a profound social and economic transformation of society. He has shown the timeless relevance of Bapu's philosophy of 'Sarvodaya', a term coined by Bapu for the title of his Gujarati translation of Ruskin's "Unto This Last". In his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, Bapu wrote about the deep and abiding influence of this work on him. He said:

"I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life."

Mahatma Gandhi described the essence of the philosophy of Sarvodaya which he defined as "the welfare of all" in the following words in his autobiography:

"The teachings of *Unto this Last* I understand to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice."

Dr. Ariyaratne's 'Sarvodaya Shramdana Sangamaya' has given practical shape and meaning to Bapu's holistic philosophy of Sarvodaya. His work, like Bapu's, has resulted in an awakening amongst the people; a deep spiritual awakening based on the values of love and compassion and a new consciousness that there is no

conflict between individual and collective welfare; an awakening which is a spur to action, collective action, based on 'sharing' of ideas, of labour, of time and effort. As Dr. Ariyaratne has said, the greatest tribute to the Mahatma is building a Sarvodaya society in the twenty first century. In a memorable lecture at the Gandhi Smriti on 18 September 1996, he described the path to this goal in these words:

"The basic needs of human beings are simple. These can be satisfied when everyone becomes conscious of the other's needs. The total transformation of man enables one to perceive the other person's needs in our context, and thus refrain as far as possible from amassing material to satisfy our needs while denying such basic needs and satisfaction in others. This leads to a society where exploitation is reduced to a minimum."

His approach is based on a deep awareness that all individuals are the same, they have the same concerns, desires, needs and requirements irrespective of their caste, colour, creed, race or religious traditions and that individual and collective goals need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, they are fully compatible and one cannot be attained without the other.

The Sangamaya, which has focussed on people-centered growth has used the concept of 'sharing' to improve the quality of life in villages by voluntary collective action and community participation. Through the efforts of this organization, great strides have been made in providing clean drinking water, education and physical infrastructure required for development in several thousand villages in Sri Lanka. The Gramodaya has led to an awakening at the district, provincial and national levels. Dr. Ariyaratne's work is now recognized globally as the numerous international awards which he has received, glowingly testify. Like the unfolding lotus petals which symbolize this glorious institution, Dr. Ariyaratne's message is radiating in ever-widening circles.

I believe that the profound significance of Dr. Ariyaratne's work is not limited merely to progress made in the social and

economic uplift of the people. Rather, it lies in the manner in which the noblest teachings of all religious and philosophical traditions, the value of the Buddha and of Bapu, of compassion and selfless service, can be assimilated by each and every individual in his own thoughts and actions. He had demonstrated clearly that these are not some abstract ideals, far removed from the day-to-day needs and requirements and concerns of ordinary people. Through his Sangmaya, he has shown how these values promote peace, harmony and brotherhood in society and improve the quality of life of the people.

Dr. Ariyaratne has applied the precepts of Bapu in a practical way to transform the lives of ordinary people. He is not a mere preacher but he practises what he preaches. He is not just a philosopher and thinker, but a man of action and an achiever. He is not just an idealist but one who has suffered and struggled for his convictions and brought about a meaningful change in the life of the masses. Our nation and indeed the world have much to learn and gain from his experience, his life and his work. We honour him today in the name of the Father of our Nation since he has carried forth the legacy of Bapu. He has built upon this legacy, strengthened it by his manifold activities and demonstrated its perennial relevance and universality.

I recall these beautiful words from the *Dhammapada* which apply in full measure to Ari, his life and his noble work:

“दुरे संतो पाकासंती
हिमवंतो व पब्बतो”

(Like the Himalayas the good are visible even from afar.)

And again, in a beautiful verse, the *Dhammapada* says :

“न पुष्पगंधो पतिवातमेति
न कंदनं तगरमल्लिका व
सतंक गंधो पतिवातमेति
सब्बा दिसा सप्पुरिसो पवायति”

(The scent of flowers cannot go against the wind; nor the scent of sandalwood, nor of rhododendron, nor of jasmine; only the reputation

of good people can go against the wind. The reputation of the virtuous ones is wafted abroad in all directions.)

I wish Dr. Ariyaratne many more years of selfless service to society.

Tyagaraja — Symbol of Total Surrender to Divinity

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to participate in the one-hundred- and-fiftieth Aradhana festival of Saint Sri Tyagabrahma Swamigal, at Thiruvayyar. Southern India, and particularly this region, has contributed immensely to our cultural and spiritual ethos and the vibrancy of our living, unbroken tradition since antiquity. Great saints and composers have brought their immense creative talents to fruition in the hospitable and fertile environment of this land nurtured and nourished by the Cauvery river. It is from here that they have spread the spiritual message of our civilization of love, brotherhood and oneness.

In a beautiful *krithi* “Muripemu galige gada...” Tyagaraja has sung in praise of Thiruvayyar, thus:

“O Rama, isn’t this joy!
To have found a town so beautiful,
One fit for Siva to wish to see?”

The reverence in which the mighty Cauvery river is held by the people who worship it as a Goddess for the many boons she has bestowed, a river which has shaped the economic, social and cultural traditions of this region, is illumined by another glorious song, *Sari vedalina*:

“Take a good long look at this Goddess Kaveri,
Flowing right along...”

She fulfils wishes abundantly—

Regardless of who you are”

It is, therefore, a special joy to be present in this hallowed city together with thousands of devotees and admirers of Tyagaraja who have congregated to pay musical homage to the Saint. Their singing imbued with deep devotion and spiritual meaning, is a deeply moving experience, a unique and unparalled event which is vivid testimony to the timeless relevance of the message of Tyagaraja, of *Bhakti*, renunciation and service to humanity. It also demonstrates in a very profound manner the abiding contribution of Tyagaraja, a musician par excellence, to Carnatic music and to the vibrant composite culture of our great country.

In order to fully comprehend and assimilate the message of Tyagaraja, it is important to bear in mind the historical context of the period during which he lived and propagated his philosophy and music. He was born just a few years after the Battles of Plassey, Panipat and Wandewash and the beginning of the East India Company rule. In political and administrative terms this marked the beginning of a traumatic period for our nation, a dark age marred by decay and degeneration, division and discord. It witnessed consolidation of alien rule and of our subjugation, as a society; it was as period which had a distressing and deeply inimical impact on our society, on the very psyche of our people.

Fortunately, for our society and civilization, this was also a time which marked the beginning of a spiritual and cultural renaissance in our country. Indeed, this period gave to our nation great saints and musicians, devout ‘bhaktas’ who drew sustenance from the eternal values of our ancient tradition and transmitted this message in simple and easily comprehensible ways to the common people. I need only mention Saint Ramaprasad and Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in Bengal, Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Gujarat, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Swami Vivekananda and the Trinity of Carnatic music — Shyama Shastri, Muthuswamy Diskshitar and Tyagaraja.

Tyagaraja was a luminous symbol of the *bhakti marg*, the path of renunciation and complete surrender to divinity. His life is

replete with instances where he spurned material benefit. Indeed, he underwent deep suffering at the hands of his brother for rejecting an offer of the King of Thanjavur for material prosperity. In his moving composition *Nidhichala sukhama*, Tyagaraja asks:

“निधि चाल सुखमा रामुनि
सन्निधि सेव सुखमा निजमुगबल्कु मनसा
ममत बंधनयुत नर स्तुति सुखमो
सुमति त्यागराज नुतुनि कीर्तन सुखमो ॥”

(Is the joy of wealth more gratifying
Than the bliss of Rama's presence so satisfying
Tell me truly, O mind of mine...
Which brings more happiness, flattery of mere mortals
bound up in their own conceit
or singing *kirtanas* of the Lord whom the knowing
Tyagaraja praises?)

Tyagaraja's very name signifies renunciation of all material pleasures and benefits. His form of dress, his life as a *sanyasi* and mendicant living off alms display the nobility of his character, his other-worldly attachment and his deep and abiding commitment to God.

Renouncing material attachments, Tyagaraja surrendered himself completely to Rama, his chosen deity, representing the ideal persona the “Maryada Purushottam”. He had a very deep personal relationship of intense devotion and admiration for Rama. Every aspect and every nuance of this loving relationship ranging from adoration, adulation, playfulness, contentment, plaintive pleasing, dejection and despondency, envy and jealousy, reproachfulness, even anger and abusiveness and culminating in joyful surrender, is reflected in his *krithis*. He sings in *Dayarani dayarani* of his intense love for Rama.

“दयरानी दयरानी – दाशरथी राम
विवरिम्प दरमा रघुवीरानन्दमुनु राम
तलचिते मेनेल्ल पुलकरिन्वेनु राम
कनुगोन नानंदमै कन्नीरू निण्डनु राम”

(Show pity and shower your mercy on me,
 Rama, son of Kind Dasharatha,
 Is it possible, O Raghuvira
 to describe in detail my rapture?
 At the mere thought of you my skin
 just tingles all over, Rama,
 My tears well up, Rama,
 with *ananda* at seeing you...)

In another moving composition *Ni cittamu na bhagyamayya*, he speaks of his seeking refuge in God. He says:

“योचिंचि कार्यमु लेदनुचु
 नोक पारि शरणनु कोन्टिनय्य
 नी चित्तमु नाभाग्यमय्य;
 निरुपाधिक ! नीवाडनय्य”

(There is no reason for me to plan
 I've taken refuge
 once and for all
 Your will is my destiny O Lord,
 What you think
 is my fate,
 Causeless Lord I am yours)

It was the medium of music, which Tyagaraja chose to express his *bhakti*, his inner feelings and intense devotion for God. Music and dance as prayer, an offering and obeisance to God, has been a vital element of our spiritual and cultural traditions. The *Natyashastra* of Bharata is referred to as the Fifth Veda. 'Om', the cosmic sound, is said to be the origin and end of all music. We are all familiar with the 'Damaru' of Lord Shiva and his cosmic dance, the 'Shiva Tandava' which is depicted in the beautiful Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, Equally, the flute of Lord Krishna and his divine 'Raas Leela' is an intrinsic part of our tradition. The *Rig Veda* refers to prayer as a love song thus:

“परि त्वा गिर्वणो गिर
इमा भवन्तु विश्वतः ।
वृद्धायुम् अनु वृद्धयो
जुष्टा भवन्तु जुष्टयः”

(Lover of song,
may these songs of mine
encompass Thee on all sides,
Exalting the Most Exalted One,
and loving, may they be loved.)

Tyagaraja, who has carried forward this tradition of music as a means for salvation, has sung of the divinity of music in a well-known composition *Raga sudharasa* thus:

“राग सुधारस पानमु जेसि राजिल्लवे; मनसा!
यागयोग त्याग भोग फल मोसङ्गे
सदाशिव मयमगु नादोङ्कार स्वर-
विदुलु जीवन्मुक्तुलनि त्यागराजु देलियु”

(Drink up the nectar called raga
and be joyful, O my mind
It gives the fruits of sacrifice and yoga,
enjoyment and tyaga...
Those who know that the musical tones
and the primordial “OM” compose
the body of Siva
are liberated souls...)

Tyagaraja's *krithis* are his eternal legacy to us. They display his great wisdom and scholarship and his manifest ability to convey the most profound thoughts and the eternal spiritual values and goals of our ancient heritage in simple language and terms to the people. His compositions affirm that there is a greater reality than just material needs and desires and that our society has a vast inbuilt reservoir of moral strength from which to draw sustenance in times of trauma and turmoil. His adoration of Rama through his songs and music in a very personalized way has brought divinity much closer to the common man. I deeply believe

that it is these values and ideals which have provided resilience to our culture, and have protected our people and society during difficult times. They have imparted the strength to overcome all obstacles.

As important as his spiritual message is the contribution of Sri Tyagaraja to our musical tradition. Together with Shyama Shastri and Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Tyagaraja strengthened the foundations of Carnatic music as we know it today. His mastery over the grammar of music, Raga and Talam, his creative genius which explored the diverse facets and moods of different ragas, his play of words and use of Sanskrit idioms in his compositions, and the beautiful harmony of words, music and rhythm made him one of the fathers of Carnatic music. He provided new direction and imparted strength and vigour to our tradition of classical music. His compositions contributed to the growth and development of Telugu language and literature.

The task before us today is to preserve, enhance and develop upon the legacy of Sri Tyagaraja. We have with us only some of the songs which he composed. It is essential to encourage research work and strengthen efforts to trace the remaining compositions of Tyagaraja. The development of a proper classification system, the listing and dating of his *krithis* and a systematic study of his work and the unfolding of his creative genius would contribute substantially to a greater understanding of Tyagaraja's philosophy and its abiding relevance, his music and compositions. Equally, it is essential to ensure that this work is available in different languages so that all our people can draw inspiration from and appreciate the beauty, the lyricism and the message of Saint Tyagaraja.

Carnatic music is notable for its eclectic approach towards change. The manner in which the violin, a western instrument, has been adopted by Carnatic music and similar efforts relating to the mandolin testify to the strong trend for experimentation. The advances in science and technology, specially in the field of acoustics and sound, have opened up immense possibilities for experimentation. While retaining the core of our tradition, I believe it would be useful to encourage creativity and inject new impulses into our classical music and dance.

Presentation of the 42nd National Film Awards, New Delhi, 17 July 1995



Addressing the Eastern Naval Command, Vishakhapatnam, 6 October 1995

*Foundation-stone laying ceremony of the Trivandrum Press Club's new complex,
Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996*



Presentation of the 43rd National Film Awards, New Delhi, 6 August 1996



The President presenting standards to Indian Air Force, 13 November 1996

At the National Cadet Corps Rally, 29 January 1997



At the presentation of Colours to the Western Fleet of the Indian Navy, Mumbai, 9 March 1997

Before concluding, I wish to refer to the words of wisdom of another great saint of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvalluvar, who wrote in his immortal *Kural*.

“From Love devotion comes;
from devotion, priceless enlightenment”

I believe this verse expresses the essence of Saint Tyagaraja’s message of love, devotion, service to society and oneness. This is the message which we must transmit to all our people and specially the younger generation. I am sure that this Aradhana festival, this celebration of Sri Tyagaraja and his work by singing his compositions collectively in joyful devotion, will help in inculcating deeper and finer feelings and sentiments among the people.

ISKCON : A Blend of Tradition and Modernity

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the inauguration of the Centre for Advancement of Culture of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) here in Bangalore. This magnificent complex, a blend of tradition and modernity, is a symbol of the dedication and devotion of ISKCON to the cause of *Bhakti* and service. It is an architectural landmark. I congratulate all those who have worked tirelessly to set up this splendid edifice.

ISKCON has spread the message of *Bhakti* throughout the world. Over the years, the Society has provided relief and succour and has brought peace and harmony into the lives of millions of people. It has grown and flourished in many countries and continents. On the occasion of the birth centenary of the founder of ISKCON, Shri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, I pay my

tributes to this enlightened soul. Following in the footsteps of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada, with determination and devotion, has propagated the message of our ethos of peace and harmony.

In today's world, there appears to be a relentless and single-minded pursuit of material wealth and prosperity. Though this has resulted in an improvement in the standards of living of people, particularly in the so-called developed western countries, the spiritual needs, requirements and aspirations are yet to be met. Material wealth has not necessarily brought happiness and peace of mind. Instead, it has been accompanied by considerable mental stress and tensions and has led to a spiral of insatiable greed and desires which remain unfulfilled. The pursuit of hedonistic pleasures with no regard to the needs of other people, specially those that are less privileged, has brought in its wake discord, discontent and disharmony.

It is in such a context that our tradition with its philosophy of love, compassion, non-violence and service has acquired new meaning, relevance and significance. The approach of *Bhakti* or devotion not merely to God but to all beings who belong to God and of selfless service, has been preached by our seers and saint-singers from remote antiquity.

The *Bhakti* movement has flourished in every part of India. The songs of the Alwars and teachings of Sri Ramanujacharya and Shri Madhavacharya in the South, the *bhajans* and *dohas* of Surdas, Sant Kabir and Mira Bai in the North, the *abhangs* of Sant Tukaram and Sant Gyaneshwar in the West, and the *kirtanas* of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva in the East are still sung and recited in million of homes.

In eastern India, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu propagated the idea of oneness of man before God. *Bhakti* to God manifested itself in love, compassion and service. It did not recognize any barriers of caste or creed. The repeated chanting of the divine name, individually and collectively, was one of the paths to salvation. In his *Shiksha ashtak*, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sings:

“नाम्नामकारी बहुधा निज सर्वशक्ति-
स्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः”

(God has expressed His own name in various ways; also He has bestowed all His powers in that name.)

“न धनं न जन सुंदरीं
कविता वा जगदीश कामये ।
मम जन्मनि जन्मनीश्वरे
भवताद्भक्ति रहैतुकी त्वयि ॥”

(O Lord of the earth, I do not pray for earthly desires. My only prayer is, God, let my unqualified devotion be to you in all my births.)

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *kirtanas* are sung by thousands of devotees not merely in India but, due to the efforts of ISKCON, throughout the world.

The *Bhakati marg* propagated by Srila Prabhupada has struck a sympathetic chord among the people which has resonated across the oceans and continents. Swamiji's approach is remarkable for its simplicity. It is not a rigid ritualistic or merely intellectual approach. It is a personal, intuitive, emotional faith based on a passionate love and adoration of the Lord. This is reflected in the singing of *kirtanas* and in living a good and decent life in harmony with oneself, with society and with nature.

Srila Prabhupada's work has given new meaning and direction to the lives of thousands of people. In India, the activities of ISKCON are rekindling the latent knowledge and awareness among our own people of our great spiritual and cultural heritage. I believe deeply that, in our efforts for modernization and growth, we must never forget the philosophy of humanism of our civilization. There can be no real progress and prosperity, there can be no balanced material and spiritual development unless and until the poorest of the poor, and the weakest of the weak in our country prosper and progress. This can happen only by re-instilling among our people the moral and ethical values of our ethos, of love and devotion, compassion and selfless service. Only by helping others can we achieve true happiness and balance in our lives.

It is vital for us to pay heed to this profound message of our tradition. It is the values and ideals of our ethos which must empower our efforts for peace, harmony, progress and prosperity in our society. We must take this message, particularly, to the youth of our country, since it is this generation which will shape and guide the destiny of our great nation. I am confident that the new complex, with its facilities for the propagation of our ancient cultural and spiritual heritage, will strengthen the roots of our people in our civilization and hence contribute to national progress.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Centre for Advancement of Culture of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I wish the Centre many years of fruitful endeavour in the service of society.

V
MASS MEDIA

Introspection on the Role of Cinema Necessary

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you this evening on the occasion of the 42nd National Film Awards presentation. I should like to extend my congratulations to all the awards winners whose talents, dedication and achievements have thus been recognized. If I may say so, there is a special significance to this in 1995 which I am told is the hundredth year of cinema in India.

Indian films have come a long way from July 1896 when cinematograph films were first shown in the Watson's Hotel at Bombay. We in India have built a rich film tradition over the years. I would like to recall the contribution of stalwarts of the film industry. Their names evoke memories of great classics which elevated artistic expression to new heights. Works of these great film makers at once represent an aesthetic and technical standard and comprise a contribution of permanent value. We must pay tribute to them for they helped build up the world's largest film industry. The achievement is the more remarkable as our film industry has been practically unaided in terms of state support.

For a number of years now, India has not only produced the largest number of films but provides the largest audiences. In 1991, it was estimated that as many as three crore people view films on any one day.

I recall the words of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru forty years ago : "I think it is perfectly correct to say that the influence of the films in India is greater than the influence of newspapers and books combined." Indeed, films represent one of the most powerful mediums of communication in our times. They have few equals in generating awareness, in imparting information, and in providing education and entertainment. The capacity of films, of riveting and absorbing attention for long periods, is perhaps the secret of their undiminishing influence and popularity. As a means of propagating a message and as a vehicle of social change, films have a unique value. Indeed, with the expanding reach of information technologies, and with television and video as supplements, it is certain that the importance of films will grow further.

It is natural, therefore, that films should be closely associated with all our national endeavours, be it motivating the people, reconstruction or strengthening integration, promoting communal harmony and addressing the wide range of vital social issues that concern us.

The enormous influence which cinema can wield over the minds of the masses qualifies it as a key partner in the quest to build a modern and progressive India.

I feel we should introspect a little about the role of cinema in India. Let us remember that the ability of a film to capture the inner ferment, currents and ethos of a society gives it quality. When significant issues are so addressed and a bond is built with the audience, a film becomes all the more noteworthy. The great personages of our film industry have never shied away from reality, however painful or controversial. But the non-conformism in their artistry has been matched with the responsibility of serious citizens. Indeed, such realisation of a greater mission must guide the making of Indian films.

Our films have a contribution to make beyond fostering the growth of our own society. Many of our films enjoy great popularity in other parts of Asia and in Latin America and Africa. There is a good base now for growth of demand in other countries of the films made in India. This is an aspect which must be borne in mind while formulating the content and style of contemporary films.

Our society is today in the midst of a process of change. Opportunities afforded by the advancement of technology have brought the world closer, lowering barriers of different kinds. Interaction among the various societies and intermingling of diverse streams is increasing. In this context, films can play a significant role in the reaffirmation of our cultural heritage. At the same time, they can also help us to assimilate what the world has to offer, so that our own culture may emerge the richer.

As we aspire to build a value-based cinema, some issues of concern appear to deserve closer and wider attention. Would it be wrong, I wonder, to be anxious about the over-projection of the baser instincts of human beings or the mechanical imitation of scenes and plots from outside which do violence to sensibilities and good taste in our culture?

Our film industry today, in all its dimensions, faces the multiple challenges of new technologies, greater competition and of diverse cultural inputs. The entire gamut of activities associated with the making of films will bear the imprint of these complex factors. By establishing standards of excellence, the Film Awards can serve to encourage Indian cinema to live up to its long and glorious tradition.

The conferment of awards on special themes has by now become a tradition. Children's films have a special place. That is as it should be. Films are an effective method of moulding the character of our youth and good children's films can make a very worthwhile contribution in this respect. Similarly, awards for films on social issues, environment, anthropology, arts and science, historical reconstruction and national integration will serve to focus attention on these aspects of life so vital for our advancement.

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is our nation's highest recognition in the field of cinema. This year, its recipient is a thespian who has virtually personified the growth of Indian cinema over half-a-century : Shri Dilip Kumar. A legend in his life time, Yusu' Saheb's contribution to classic cinema has been outstanding. I am told that Devika Rani, the first Phalke Award winner, had something to do with bringing him into the film world. I extend to him my special felicitations and on behalf of all of you, I wish him many more years of creative and fruitful endeavour.

I thank you all for having associated me with this memorable event. May I express my sincere good wishes that the Indian film industry may rise from strength to strength in the months and years ahead.

Press in India — A Potent Force

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to associate myself with the foundation-stone laying ceremony for the new Press Club Complex. This

Foundation-stone laying ceremony of the Trivandrum Press Club's new complex, Thiruvananthapuram, 13 February 1996

is an important occasion since it marks the beginning of a new chapter in the great journalistic tradition of Thiruvananthapuram and indeed of Kerala.

When completed, the new Complex will offer a good forum for journalists and other media professionals to discuss and exchange views, ideas and information. It will provide modern facilities for research and training and enable journalists to keep pace with new technological and other developments.

Since its inception in 1968, the Press Club has become a centre for excellence in journalism. Your schemes for the welfare of journalists, the awards for talented media persons and the training facilities of your Institute of Journalism, have contributed to the vibrancy and vitality of journalism in Kerala.

Kerala has the proud privilege of having the highest literacy rate in the country. It is the first State in India to be declared fully literate. The people of Kerala deserve to be warmly congratulated for this accomplishment. It is, therefore, not surprising that it is the Kerala newspaper *Malayala Manorama* published from several locations, including Thiruvananthapuram, which has been for several years the largest selling daily in India. And this circulation is not restricted to urban areas. The newspaper is read widely in rural areas as well.

In your glorious journalistic history since 1847, when the first news-letter was brought out near Tellicherry, the Press in Kerala has traversed a long distance. Today I am informed that there are 168 daily newspapers, 145 weeklies, 132 fortnightlies, 556 monthlies and many other magazines. In all, I understand there are more than 1,000 news publications. This is indeed a remarkable achievement.

More impressive than these numbers is however, the immense contribution, in diverse fields, which the Press and journalists have made to society. Who can forget the sterling role of the pioneers of Malayalam journalism in our freedom struggle. K.P. Kesava Menon, the inspiration behind *Matrubhumi* was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress in Kerala. I recall the contribution of Ramakrishna Pillai who was banished from Travancore for his revolutionary ideas. The work of K.V. Mappillai, who founded *Malayala Manorama*, for the uplift of the poor and weaker sections of society, is noteworthy. History records in

golden letters, the untiring efforts of Sahodaran Ayyappan for social transformation through his crusade against casteism, discrimination and untouchability.

Other notable individuals who played a vital role in guiding and shaping Malayalam journalism include C.V. Kunhiraman of the *Kerala Kaumudi*, Muhammad Abdul Rahman Sahib, the founder of *Al-Ameen*, and Moorkotu Kumaran of *Mitawadi*. In more recent years, we have all been inspired by the writings of the late Edatala Narayan and K.A. Damodara Menon. Abu Abraham with his insightful, tongue-in-check comments through his cartoons, on issues of public life, is a household name in India. And these are only a few names in a long list of illustrious and eminent writers and journalists from Kerala.

This intellectual tradition of writing and journalism in Kerala reflected our national tradition where our leaders such as Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and above all the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, wielded the power of the written world to communicate with the nation. Their ideas, comments and views struck a deep and responsive chord in the hearts of our people and played a pivotal role in our freedom struggle and in contributing to social justice and emancipation.

Indeed Gandhiji's writings in *Young India* and *Harijan*, which he edited, have become immortal. They continue to guide and inspire all of us. Referring to the crucial role of the Press in society, Bapu said : "The newspapers have taken the place of the *Gita*, the Bible and the Quran with the people. For them the printed sheet is gospel truth. This fact throws a great responsibility on the editors and news-writers." I am happy to observe that the Press have executed this challenging responsibility with due diligence and care.

A free Press is one of the pillars of our modern, secular and democratic society. Our media has continued to discharge its vital responsibility in educating society about topical issues and concerns. These include political affairs, economic and business matters and social and cultural issues. The media have assisted in the dissemination of information. They have contributed to national efforts against poverty, ignorance and disease. Only recently the nation-wide campaign against pulse polio was concluded with great

success. This was due in no small measure to the worthy role played by the media in spreading the word about this programme throughout the country.

Over the years, and particularly since the new economic policies of liberalization and integration with the global economy have been pursued, there has been a rapid growth in mass communications. The advent of satellite communications has brought in a significant new dimension. The entire population of the country can be reached by audio-visual media. In fact, new media technology enables easy access to countries and peoples abroad. It is said that the communications revolution is reducing the world to a global village.

These developments in information technology have opened up immense opportunities for growth and expansion of both print and audio-visual media. Our newspapers, radio and television can play an increasingly important role in strengthening national unity and integration as well as in fostering international friendship and co-operation.

The credit for the achievements of the Press in India is due to the hard work and painstaking efforts of all of you, media professionals. Indeed our Press is admired in other countries and societies. I am confident that you will continue to strengthen and enhance the sterling contribution of the media to our society by constantly adapting, evolving and keeping pace with new developments. I wish the Trivandrum Press Club many years of fruitful activity and service.

Cinema As A Catalyst in Social Change

I AM HAPPY to associate myself with the National Film Awards ceremony. Such occasions provide a welcome opportunity to meet and interact with creative and talented individuals in our society. I extend my warm felicitations to all those who have been honoured for excellence in the field of cinema.

I am pleased that the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award has been conferred on Dr. Raj Kumar, one of the legends of Indian cinema. His contributions over several decades, particularly to the Kannada film industry, have brought him great accolades from the people. I wish him many more creative years in the cause of good cinema.

More than many other spheres of artistic endeavour, it is the medium of film which exerts a very strong impact on contemporary society. The allure and magic of the moving picture enthralls and captivates people. Films often set trends, influence custom, style and behaviour, particularly among the younger generation. Many of our film personalities have become role models for younger people. They are loved, admired and even venerated.

Though films are mainly a form of entertainment which is affordable and accessible to a large number of our people, many of our films deal with major social issues and concerns of the day. They not only reflect and portray contemporary beliefs and ideas but also play a catalytic role in promoting social change. In the early decades of this century, nationalist-minded film makers used this medium successfully to instil the patriotic fervour and advocate the cause of freedom. I also recall seeing films in my youth which moulded public opinion on subjects such as widow remarriage and inter-caste marriage, among others.

In more recent times too, our film makers have handled complex social issues with great care and sensitivity. They have fostered a tradition of humanism and social justice. Some films have made powerful statements on subjects of national concern such as terrorism and communal harmony. They have done so in a manner which is poignant and have attracted widespread national approbation. Indeed, they have contributed to the ongoing public debate on such issues, helped forge a national consensus and have strengthened efforts to promote national unity and integration.

India can be proud of having one of the largest film industries in the world. I am told that we produce more films in different languages, than any other country. The film industry in India represents the rich cultural diversity of our society. It speaks in the universal language of art which appeals to all. The development of modern dubbing technology as well as the welcome trend for closer

interaction between film industries based in different regions of our country, has brought our people closer together and strengthened the oneness of our society.

The popularity of Indian films is not limited to India or even to the large Indian diaspora. Rather, they have found audiences in several parts of the world, particularly in West Asia, Africa and in East European and Central Asian countries. Even today, the names of Raj Kapoor and Nargis and of their film *Awara* bring back nostalgic memories in some of these countries. In our immediate neighbourhood, films have built bridges of friendship and understanding among the people of South Asia. The advent of modern satellite communications and video technology has made this cultural bonding much easier and far more difficult to regulate and control. Our films have become "cultural ambassadors". They also have the potential of securing much-needed foreign exchange. A related aspect which deserves greater attention is to ensure that video-piracy is prevented and that the implementation of copyright laws is strengthened.

The glitter of the film world often makes one forget that a lot of toil and effort goes into the making of a film; or that it is a multi-billion-rupee industry which provides employment and livelihood to a large number of people. What the audience sees in a theatre is only the final product, the stars, the music and the story-lines. What is not immediately apparent but is vital for the success of a film, is the work of countless dedicated and talented individuals behind the scenes, in diverse areas such as editing, lighting, photography and as extras. I would like to pay a special tribute to these unsung heroes who work under difficult conditions. Some of these individuals are engaged in performing dangerous stunts which expose them to serious injuries. It is, therefore, important to provide for their requirements and need and to ensure that suitable insurance schemes and packages are devised to protect them and their families.

The national film awards have been instituted to recognize excellence in the making of feature films, documentaries, animation films as well as films dealing with social, environmental and other topical issues of importance to society. Considerable significance is attached to promoting films in different languages. Furthermore, the awards encourage pursuit of high standards in diverse aspects of film-making, including editing, music and cinematography.

To achieve the objective of promoting good cinema, it is important to ensure that award-winning films are exhibited throughout the country so that they are viewed by as wide an audience as possible. Our best productions should also be shown in international film festivals. Such opportunities would inspire others working in this field to strive for excellence by experimenting with the medium, innovating and developing new and better techniques and styles. It would also encourage fresh talent.

Equally, it is important for our film-makers to be exposed to the latest developments in international cinema and to have access to the most modern equipment and technology. I believe this maxim of the *Rig Veda* is of particular relevance for our film professionals :

“आ नो भद्राः कृतवो यन्तु विश्वतः”

(Let noble and positive influences come to us from all sides.)

As we celebrate 100 years of films in India, we also celebrate the vitality and dynamism of an important field of creative endeavour in our society. I would once again like warmly to congratulate the award-winners and wish them all success in the years ahead.

Press Must Exercise Restraint

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Press Council of India. The Council has rendered invaluable service to our society by supporting and enhancing the role and the work of the Indian Press, the life-blood of our democracy. It has been chaired by illustrious legal luminaries who have brought to bear their vast experience and legal acumen to the proceedings of the Council. Eminent journalists from different parts of India have made this a truly national body, representative of the vibrant tradition of journalism in India. The

Parliamentarians in the Council testify to the close and inseparable link between democratic institutions and the Press. I congratulate the Council and all who have been associated with it, on this occasion.

For me personally, it is always a pleasure to be with friends from the journalistic profession. Having spent more than 50 years in public life, I have had the privilege of knowing many members of this fraternity and am proud to count them among my friends. I myself have been personally associated with English, Hindi and Urdu journalism as editor of *Light and Learning*, *Lucknow Law Journal*, *Jyoti* and *Ilm-o-Noor*. This was during the heady days of the freedom struggle and the excitement of the Quit India Movement when many of us went to jail. Indeed, the Press played a very vital role during our nationalist movement and contributed in substantial measure to our freedom.

At a time when radio was controlled by the colonial Government and television had not yet come into vogue, it was the written word which was the only means of communication between the people, between our leaders and the common man. It is through the Press newspapers, journals, magazines and pamphlets that our leaders created a mass political awareness which resulted in a national awakening. The stirrings of patriotic and nationalist fervour and the channelizing of this emotion into a cohesive movement for Independence was a major contribution of the Press during that period.

There was an acute awareness of the power of the written word, which almost all our nationalist leaders employed to mobilise public opinion in support of the cause of freedom. The list of these illustrious sons of India is long, but I would like to recall a few names—Raja Rammohan Roy, Lokmanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Subramanya Bharati, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Surendranath Banerjee, C.Y. Chintamani, K.C. Sen, M.G. Ranade and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. What is also noteworthy is that the nationalist press was represented effectively in every region and in every language of our country. *Bharat Mitra* and *Pratap* in Hindi, *Tehzeeb-ul-Akhlaq* in Urdu, *Sanjivni* in Bengali, *Kesari* in Marathi, *Desha Mitra* in Gujarati, *Kannada Kesari* in Kannada, *Swadeshabhimani* in Malayalam, *Ravi* in Telugu, *Desha Bhaktan* in Tamil and *Prajatantra* in Oriya were all actively engaged in the

struggle for human justice and dignity. If I may illustrate with just one instance the role which our press saw for itself during the freedom struggle, the first issue of *Aaj* on 5 September 1920 described its objective as the enhancement of India's prestige and her political emancipation.

The avowed objective of the nationalist press in India was freedom and liberation and, as I indicated earlier, our leaders comprehended fully the powerful influence of this medium in the attainment of our goals. Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi on several occasions had referred to this. In "My Picture of Free India", he wrote :

"The newspapers have taken the place of the *Gita*, the Bible and the Quran with the people. For them the printed sheet is gospel truth. The fact throws a great responsibility on the editors and news-writers."

The colonial Government too realized the impact which the Press had on public opinion and made several efforts to muzzle it. The infamous Vernacular Press Act of 1879, the Press Act of 1910, the Rowlatt Act of 1919 and the Press and Unauthorized Newspapers Act of 1930 are only some of the legal mechanisms which they employed. Stiff fines and penalties, prison sentences, censorship, banning and closure of newspapers were some of the tactics devised by the colonial administration. But these were ineffective and could not silence the Press, which articulated the yearnings and the aspirations of the people for freedom and human dignity. They could not dampen the patriotic fervour of the people and the commitment of the leaders to the sacred cause of freedom. Indeed, every effort to muzzle our Press strengthened the resolve of our leaders and journalists to advance their struggle.

All our leaders had experienced personally, the consequences of these clumsy efforts at censorship and control over information flows, acts which were abhorrent and totally alien to our tradition of tolerance and respect for diverse, indeed, antagonistic, opinions. Though the development of the Press in India may be relatively recent, our tradition for democratic discourse and debate is ancient and deeply rooted in our civilization. The *Rig Veda* has articulated this in very clear and unambiguous terms :

“सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्।
समानं मंत्रम् अभिमंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोभि।

समानी व आकुतिः समाना हृदयानि वः
समानम् अस्तु वो मनो यथ वः सुसहासति ।”

(Assemble; speak with one another;
Let your minds be of one accord.
As ancient gods enjoy their due portions
May your aim be common, your assembly common;
Common the mind, and the thoughts of these united.
A common purpose do I lay before you;
and worship with your common oblation.
Common be your aim, and your hearts united;
Your mind be one so that all may happily live together.)

This approach assumes that there are diverse opinions and that nobody has a monopoly over knowledge, ideas and truth. It assumes the right to information. It stresses that decisions must be arrived at after debate and discussion and after hearing all points of view.

It is against the backdrop of this ingrained democratic tradition and the heavy-handed efforts of colonial rulers to silence the Press, that the leadership of the Indian National Congress included in the famous Resolution on Fundamental Rights at the Karachi Session in March 1931, the “freedom of speech and of the Press”. Mahatma Gandhi had himself moved this historic Resolution. After Independence, this solemn commitment is embedded in our Constitution which proclaims the “freedom of speech and expression” as a Fundamental Right. Furthermore, under Article 32 of the Constitution a citizen and indeed the Press, have the right to move the Supreme Court in the event of infringement of this right.

During the five decades of freedom, the Press has played a valuable role in strengthening our democratic polity. It has helped in ensuring greater accountability of those in authority. Equally, the Press has been a profound barometer of public opinion on political, economic and social issues of the day. All of us are aware of the extent to which the debates and discussions in Parliament rely on Press reports. Our free and fair Press, is indeed the envy of many countries.

The Press Council is performing a vital role in promoting a free Press, a responsible press. Just as every right has a corresponding duty, freedom too has its own obligations. Mahatma Gandhi had expressed the duty of journalists in “My Picture of Free India” thus : “Newspapers are a powerful influence ... The editors and

their assistants have to be extra careful about the news they give and the manner in which they dress it.”

Bapu was firmly opposed to any extraneous control of the Press. Rather, he believed that both freedom and its corresponding obligation must be controlled from within, i.e., by the journalists themselves. In *My Experiments with Truth*, Bapu said :

“The Newspaper Press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countrysides and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within.”

The Press Council exercises the “control from within”. It is a body which comprises mainly pressmen. It has been called a “court of honour”. It works on the basis of moral sanctions amongst peers.

I am aware that from time to time there have been proposals to strengthen the work of the Press Council in diverse ways. It is said that a watch-dog must, on occasion, bite; and in order to bite it should have teeth, namely, punitive powers. Personally, I feel that freedom of the Press is too cherished a principle to be tampered with in any way. I should like to recall Pandit Nehru’s words in this connection :

“I would rather have a complete free Press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated Press.”

Regulation, if at all required, must be internal. Already, the Council has undertaken pioneering work in developing a Guide to Journalistic Ethics as well as guidelines for the reporting on sensitive matters such as communal disturbances.

This anniversary provides an important opportunity for the Council to take stock of its work and activities and prepare itself for the challenges of the future in order to enhance its contributions to society. In recent years, particularly after the opening up of our economy, there has been a dramatic expansion of the electronic media. How does this have an impact on the role of the Press? Within newspaper networks, there is a trend towards growing corporatization. How can we ensure that the social objective of

newspapers, of informing the public, of moulding public opinion and ensuring greater transparency and accountability of those in authority, remains uppermost and that it is not subordinated to commercial considerations?

Several other important questions also arise with regard to the greater effectiveness of the Council. How can the Council strengthen its moral authority? Are the procedures for inquiry into various cases satisfactory or do they need to be streamlined and rationalized? The Press Council has a formidable mandate in the context of the vast diversity of the Indian Press, both linguistic and geographical. Can we devise methods whereby the mechanism and authority of the Press Council can be made more accessible on a nation-wide basis, both to journalists and the reading public? The Council has built up a rich corpus of case law. How can this be disseminated most effectively? What steps can we contemplate to create greater awareness about the role of the Council? I trust that in the years to come steps will be taken to strengthen the infrastructure of the Press Council to enable greater utilization of its facilities and that the Government as well as important institutions in the Press would help in this process.

I have posited these questions and issues so that experts and those involved in the work of Press Council could deliberate upon them. These are indeed weighty issues and I hope in your seminar, you would discuss some of them.

I am thankful to the Chairman and members of the Press Council for having invited me on this occasion and for giving me the opportunity of sharing my thoughts with them.

Films Should Be Utilized to Foster Social Change

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the ceremony for the presentation of the 44th National Film Awards. I

congratulate the talented and creative artists who are being honoured today for the high standards of excellence they have achieved and, indeed, set, for others to emulate.

Films have become an important part of the daily lives of the common man. I believe that the greatest advantage that this medium possesses is the felicity with which it appeals both at the level of emotions and intellect. As a film unfolds, the viewer begins to empathize with its characters. Being the cheapest and most popular form of entertainment and easy to enjoy and appreciate, films exercise a significant influence on the people. Indeed, film personalities have become role-models, particularly, for the younger generation. Unfortunately there is a tendency in some of our films to cater to our baser instincts. There is a glorification of violence and crime in cinema which is a worrying phenomenon. Those associated with this powerful medium, therefore, carry a very onerous responsibility of conveying the correct social message through their work.

While principally a means of entertainment, the potential of this medium should be utilized to foster social change and strengthen the spirit of unity and oneness among our people. Some of the vexing concerns of the day, including communalism and terrorism have been portrayed in a powerful and sensitive manner in our films. Such films, regrettably, remain few and far between. I would urge our film industry to intensify their contributions towards moulding public opinion in favour of our national goals of peace, development and social justice.

A striking and perhaps unique characteristic of our film industry is the great diversity in terms of genres of films produced and the variety of languages and cultural milieus they represent. In a sense, this industry symbolizes the vibrant and rich cultural heritage of India. Dr. Sivaji Ganesan, is one of the greatest icons of Tamil cinema. A legend in his lifetime, his career has spanned five decades and almost 300 films. I extend my warm felicitations to this fine and sensitive actor, the doyen of Tamil cinema, for receiving the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke Award. His fame and renown have spread far beyond the confines of Tamil Nadu. I wish him many more years of success in the world of films. I also hope that some of his well-known films would be dubbed in Hindi and

other languages so that they can reach a larger audience in our country. Indeed, efforts should be made to dub all National Award winning films in different languages so that the people throughout the country can enjoy and experience good cinema.

I would like specially to congratulate all award winners in the non-feature films category. The expansion of television networks has thrown up new opportunities for documentary film makers. A dedicated audience for films on social issues such as the environment, tourism and travel, women and family welfare, art and culture, among others, is building up. This is an encouraging trend. Facilities should be provided for screening some of these films in cinema halls as well so that they reach the vast Indian viewership for feature films.

This year the entire nation is celebrating the Golden Jubilee of our Independence. The film industry, I am sure, would participate in these celebrations with enthusiasm. The history of our freedom struggle is a vivid pageant of valour, sacrifice and unswerving commitment to the moral and ethical values of our civilization. Led by giants among men, it inspired millions of people in India and throughout the world to struggle for equality, justice and human dignity. As a nation and people, we must not allow our collective memory of this glorious phase of our history to be dimmed. I would urge all film makers to come forward and take the initiative to document our freedom struggle and bring it closer to the lives of the younger generation.

With these words, I once again congratulate all award winners and wish them success in their efforts to bring quality cinema to our people.

VI
SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

Science — A Quest for Truth

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you today at the concluding function of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian National Science Academy.

We are heir to a great tradition of science. The remains of the Indus Valley civilization testify to the advancements made by our forefathers far back in history. During the Vedic period, a profound knowledge of the physical world was in evidence. Be it astronomy or mathematics, algebra or geometry, medicine, surgery or botany, our ancestors made their contribution felt all through the course of our tumultuous history. If, 'zero', and the decimal system reflected their creativity at the conceptual level, the Iron Pillar standing in Delhi since the fifth century A.D. remains a monument to their metallurgical skills. India's scientific influence extended to other societies, with major works being translated into Arabic and eventually finding their way to Europe.

In the modern era, this tradition continued and was reflected in the endeavours of brilliant minds like Ramanujam, J.C. Bose and C.V. Raman. As our freedom struggle evolved, such individual talents were channelised into a national programme of institution-building. Science and technology were rightly envisaged as the engines of development, and development itself seen as increasingly knowledge-based. The creation of an educational, research and technological base was visualised as an intrinsic aspect of national reconstruction. Pandit Nehru, who is rightly regarded the architect of modern India, expressed the importance he attached to science and technology by regularly participating at annual meetings of the Indian Science Congress Association.

Independent India had great expectations of benefits of science, best expressed in Pandit Nehru's words at the Indian Science Congress at Allahabad in December 1937 :

"Science was the very texture of life without which our modern world would vanish It was science alone that could

solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.”

The close relationship between scientific and economic development was widely recognised, given the influence of technology, productivity and employment on one another. The architect of this very Academy, Prof. Meghnad Saha, was significantly chosen as a Member of the Planning Committee constituted by the Indian National Congress under the Chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. Relying on the applications of science to solve problems faced by our society and to bring about transformation in social life has been a significant feature of our national life in the five decades after Independence. Today, even as we consolidate our economic achievements and develop our vast human resources, we recall the collective contribution of the great scientific institution builders who made possible our national rejuvenation. Our tribute should take the form of greater determination to evolve technologies appropriate to India's requirements.

Science has a vital role in the development of any society. But its contribution is not one limited to material achievements. Its spirit has influenced human thinking over generations. It has created what Panditji used to call the ‘scientific temper’—a rational and logical approach to life. It is an approach which discards prejudices and emotions and supports objectivity. Science is, after all, a journey of knowledge in the quest for truth. By definition, a scientific approach has to be an open one, recognising that somebody else may also have a contribution to make. It becomes a way of thinking which values humanism and tolerance.

In this context, Jawaharlal Nehru once stated :

“If we look back at India's long history, we find that our forefathers made wonderful progress whenever they looked out on the world with clear and fearless eyes and kept the windows of their minds open to give and receive . . . When they grew narrow in outlook and shrank from outside influence, India suffered a setback.”

The belief that there is no monopoly on knowledge or on truth is part of our tradition. The *Rig Veda*, the oldest record of human thinking states :

“एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा : वदन्ति”

(Truth can be reached from various approaches.)

It also enjoins us :

“आनो भद्रा : कृतवो यन्तु विश्वतः”

(Let knowledge come from all sides).

These ancient precepts today take the form of a scientific approach to life. It is the duty of the scientific community to carve out a role beyond research, development and applications. Scientists shape human thought and in today's world, when narrow thinking and exclusivism are so rampant, have the great responsibility of promoting pluralism and tolerance.

Scientific academies all over the world are dedicated to advancing the frontiers of human knowledge. Because applications of science are so vital, they are active participants in the process of development. As organised institutions representing the best intellect of the nation, their role in the formulation of public policy is crucial. Development itself is a complex process. As we have now discovered with respect to environmental degradation, mankind is tempted by immediate advantage to inflict damage on its long-term future. Scientists must, therefore, pay greater attention to studying and analysing issues of social concern. They must come forward with their views when difficult decisions are to be taken. Their voice must be increasingly heard when controversial issues are debated. All of us look to this academy with expectation in this regard.

If science is seen as providing solutions to age-old problems, its irresponsible use can also threaten the very survival of this planet. The destruction of our natural environment through a wasteful consumption of non-renewable resources is a prime example. The invention and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another. Scientists have the capability to create, but should not disown responsibility after creation. The voice of reason must be heard as strongly in national debates as in international fora. I see among the audience, representatives of Academies from different parts of the world. I understand that you will collectively deliberate on major issues facing humanity. I am sure that from these debates will arise a stronger sense of cooperation on the vital issues of our times.

The unending quest for knowledge requires sustained research.

Research, in turn, needs a high level of financial inputs. It was natural that in India, Government should have become the major source of support in the period after Independence. We have now reached a stage of development where reliance on Government must be outgrown. In today's climate of economic reform, the private sector that is articulate about its rights and opportunities must be equally forthcoming about its responsibilities. As significant beneficiaries of scientific research and application, Indian industry must come forward with major investments in research and development. Our R&D expenditure is currently less than one per cent of our GNP. This does not behove a major economy which wishes to make its presence felt in global markets. Investments in human resource development must be made aware of the long-term gains of creating and sustaining high quality scientific and technical expertise.

Each year, I have the pleasure of meeting young scientists selected by this Academy, honoured for their talent and creativity. That meeting renews my faith in the ability of our younger generation to build further on the achievements of their predecessors. Their confidence and dynamism are as impressive as their achievements. Today, we face a competitive world with a growing emphasis on the quality of human resources. In ensuring that India takes its rightful place in the global economy, scientists of our country must lead the way. I have no doubt that they will face up to the challenge.

May I state once again how pleased I am to be here among this galaxy of scientists from India and abroad. I extend my best wishes for the growth of the Indian National Science Academy as a strong and vibrant institution from which will emanate new directions for Indian science and society.

Build Infrastructure for Sustainable Growth

I AM GLAD to associate myself with the Tenth Indian Engineering Congress in Jaipur. I recall the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of

the Institution of Engineers last year. Your institution, as the apex organization for engineers in India, has rendered yeoman service over several decades, in diverse ways. It has provided a forum for engineers to exchange ideas and acquaint themselves with new developments in their field. It has assisted in the advancement of technical education and of engineering training in India. Through this forum, I wish to state that the nation is proud of the contribution made by our engineers in national reconstruction and development.

Pandit Nehru often spoke of the need to develop a scientific temper amongst our people and of the vital role of science and technology in promoting economic development. To him, science was not only a pursuit of knowledge; it was necessary for improving the living standards of our people by eliminating poverty, disease and ignorance and by modernizing our productive processes. In his speech to the Indian Science Congress in New Delhi on 21st January, 1959, Panditji said :

“For the first time in human history it can be said with some confidence that mankind has the capacity and the power to get rid of the physical ills that humanity suffers from, to bring about a measure of welfare to all the thousands, millions of inhabitants of this world which nobody could dream of previously.”

The challenge facing us then and now is to apply the principles of science and scientific techniques to boost productivity and growth. It is in this process of transferring the fruits of research from our laboratories to the field, where our engineers and skilled personnel play a key role. They are the assimilators and the users of technology. They provide the link between the inventions of scientists and the innovations which can be applied in our factories and work-places.

In today's world, where significant advances have been made in virtually every area of economic activity, the engineering profession too has diversified and expanded. Whether it is the field of aeronautics, communications, electronics, information technology, environmental management, soil conservation or construction, it is the engineers who are called upon to design and execute projects. Their work is not merely limited to glamorous high-technology areas. It is equally, if not more, vital for rural development, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and conservation. One of my distinguished predecessors, Dr. Zakir Husain, had said, stressing the role of engineers in our economic life :

“In this war against poverty that we have launched we require the services of a vast army of first-rate engineers to be professionally more competent and skillful and also to be imbued with a passion to serve our people.”

The theme you have selected for this Conference, “Infrastructure — Its Importance in the Development of the Economy”, is crucial at the present stage of development of India. The economic reform programme which is founded on the philosophy of decontrol, deregulation and delicensing, has released the latent potential of the economy. Significant growth impulses have been generated as the creative talents and enterprise of our citizens have come to the fore. The private sector is increasingly playing a more active and important role in the economy. In order to ensure that the benefits of the programme are distributed widely and amongst all sections of society, particularly the poorest and the most underprivileged, it is essential to sustain economic growth over a period of time.

One of the most significant obstacles to sustainable growth in India today is the supply constraint in our infrastructure sector. To give just one instance, I am informed that the lack of adequate wagon capacity and congestion at our ports is hampering our export effort, resulting in the loss of precious foreign exchange for the nation. In addition to removing the transportation bottleneck, we also require to construct several thousand kilometres of roads, expressways and highways. Similarly, the infrastructure for communications needs to be modernized and expanded to make up for the relative low telephone density in India and emerging demand. I am also informed that in order to meet our energy requirements, our power capacity should more than double in the next decade. In value terms, the investment requirements, I understand, run into thousand of billions of rupees. While most of the resources will have to be raised by the Government, private and foreign investment has a major role to play in supplementing public resources and by injecting new technology. However, if we have to attract private investment, our projects should be profitable, and they should generate adequate returns.

By their very nature, infrastructure projects, which provide public services, are characterised by long gestation periods and low profitability. In addition to ensuring the financial viability of infrastructure projects, it is important to take into account the

interests of both consumers of infrastructure services and producers. Independent regulatory agencies in each of these sectors could assist in harmonizing these requirements.

Though there may be a financial constraint slowing down our efforts in developing infrastructure projects, we in India, unlike in some other countries, are fortunate in that we have no manpower constraints. India is known internationally for the professionalism and expertise of its scientists, engineers, computer programmers and technicians. We have a long tradition of excellence in these disciplines. There is also no dearth of semi-skilled and unskilled labour required to meet the challenges.

Referring to the appointment of a Scientific Manpower Committee, in a speech on 17 February, 1948 in the Constituent Assembly, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said : "We attach the greatest importance to using the scientific manpower we have, to increasing it and rapidly augmenting it. All this is the real basis, the foundation, that is being laid for the future progress . . ."

Our expertise, particularly in the construction of civil works, has been of long standing. One of the first institutions of higher education established in India was the Thomson College of Engineering in Roorkee. Since then, we have made great strides. India has some of the best institutes of technology in the world. We have developed a large pool of scientific and technical manpower. Our engineers have executed impressive projects both in India and abroad, particularly in West Asia and South-East Asia. They have brought kudos for India with their work.

The opening up of our economy in recent years to both domestic and global competition has presented significant challenges for our industry, and especially for our engineers. First, greater domestic competition has implied that consumers have more choices and options. The quality of the product is increasingly becoming a key element influencing purchase decisions. Second, our products now have to stand up to global competition. They have to compete both in terms of quality and cost with products from other countries. In order to be competitive, it is essential to improve productivity by using superior technology, and reduce cost through better management of men, materials and machines. After-sales service and support for our products, both in India and abroad, is necessary. It is our engineers who are called upon to perform these tasks which will make our firms and economy more competitive. They can

do this only by having an unswerving commitment to the maintenance of the highest standards of efficiency through rigorous training, discipline, perseverance and tenacity of purpose. The battle for world markets cannot be won in a day. It requires arduous and sustained effort.

I am sure that our engineering fraternity will meet the global challenges we face today, with vigour and determination. I am confident their efforts will meet with success. In their success, the nation succeeds. With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Tenth Indian Engineering Congress.

Strive to End Hunger by 2000AD

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the inauguration of the Second International Crop Science Congress. I extend a hearty and cordial welcome on behalf of the Government and people of India to all the distinguished scientists and participants who have travelled to Delhi to participate in this Congress. I am confident that your discussions and exchanges on diverse issues relating to crop science would be fruitful and would assist in developing research strategies and programmes for the welfare of all humanity.

The great advances in science and the application of science for the benefit of mankind have unravelled many of the mysteries of nature and the universe. The onset of the age of information technology and computers have opened up immense new opportunities for a deeper understanding of nature and for the advancement of human civilization.

Human society is today faced with contradictory challenges and approaches. On the one hand, technology has made flow of information and knowledge effortless. On the other, there are growing and disturbing signs towards restricting the flow of

informaton by imposing conditionalities on access. It is for this reason that your Congress is of vital importance since you, the scientists and experts from all over the world, will exchange information and ideas and evolve strategies which will enable the building of sustainable food and nutrition security systems, at the national, regional and global levels. I hope you would all consider yourselves as trustees of the knowledge that you possess and would share it with others without subordinating it to commercial considerations and make it available for the benefit of farmers throughout the world. We should pay heed to what Mahatma Gandhi had said about regarding ourselves as trustees of wealth. In *Young India* of 6 October 1927, he wrote : “No matter how much money we have earned, we should regard ourselves as trustees holding these moneys for the welfare of all our neighbours.” What Bapu said of financial wealth is equally valid for intellectual wealth.

During the fifty years after Independence, India has made significant strides in diverse areas of human endeavour. We have a well-developed industrial base, a vast pool of highly technically trained manpower and a buoyant foreign trade sector. But perhaps, the most spectacular advance has been in the field of agriculture. During colonial rule, the spectre of famine used to loom large before our people. Only in 1943 a large number of our people starved and perished in the terrible Bengal famine. The success story in the agricultural sector is indeed a saga of the application of science and technology in this area. It is a translation of the vision of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru into reality. During an Address to the Indian Sciene Congress in Calcutta on 26 December 1937, Panditji had said :

“It is science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.”

The magnificent achievement of food sufficiency and self-reliance is a shining vindication of this philosophy. Today, we feed three times as many people as at the dawn of Independence. We also export food to those in need. I salute our farmers and our scientists who are responsible for this extraordinary accomplishment. The nation is proud of their dedicated work as well as the work of all those associated with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the State Agriculture Universities.

Despite the Green Revolution, India and other developing countries cannot afford to be complacent. Many of our countries face an inexorable increase in population which has exerted considerable pressure on scarce and precious resources including water and soil. Large-scale deforestation and soil-erosion is taking a major toll on the environment and climate. We need to meet the growing requirements of the people for a nutritious diet, while preserving, protecting and enhancing our ecological heritage and the environment, which we hold in trust for future generations. This philosophy of protecting Mother Nature is an integral part of Indian tradition. Our tradition states :—

“द्यौः शान्तिर् अन्तरिक्ष शान्तिः
पृथिवी शान्तिर् आपः शान्तिर्
औषधयः शान्तिः
वनस्पतयः शान्तिः”

(Peace of sky, peace of mid-region, peace of earth,
peace of waters, peace of trees)

The challenge before society and specially the scientists is to increase productivity and output together with a more optimal utilization of the earth's finite natural resources. Just as the development and widespread use of high-yielding varieties of foodgrains in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the Green Revolution in India, today, we need to develop varieties which use limited amounts of water, soil and pesticides. Ecotechnology is the path to an evergreen revolution. Let us tread on this path with determination and without compromise.

A related challenge is to transfer the fruits of research from the laboratory to the farms. Useful lessons can be derived from the successful experience of our 'Lab to Land' programmes. Furthermore, it is essential to involve farmers, both men and women, in the development and application of new technologies, for it is only with their active participation that we can achieve our goal of sustainable agricultural development.

An area which I believe is important for consideration at your Congress, is crop diversification, both for production and consumption. We should not limit ourselves to a very narrow crop basket. Efforts should be strengthened to encourage, both among

consumers and producers, the acceptance of new, more nutritious varieties of foodgrains. For instance, soya which is rich in nutrients is unfortunately, even today, not a popular food in India. I hope this Congress will devise a strategy for enlarging the food basket. This will also assist in revitalizing the tradition of genetic conservation of tribal and farm families who in the past conserved and cultivated not only numerous crop plants but also a large array of land areas and varieties of crops like rice, pulses, oil-seeds, millets and vegetables.

All this will require the provision of a strong and determined impetus to agricultural research and development, both at national and international levels. Apart from the Government, the private sector and, particularly, companies engaged in food-processing, should come forward to support this effort.

Finally, I believe that the entire global society must play a vigilant role in ensuring the conservation of our genetic heritage. Biotechnology can be usefully applied for the benefit of mankind only if we sustain and nourish our genetic diversity, a movement which must enlist the support of all sections of society.

The Gene Bank, which is being inaugurated during this Congress—I am informed this is one of the largest in the world — provides an opportunity to inform the public of the importance of conservation of our genetic diversity and of its use for the benefit of mankind. This symbol of exemplary partnership between India and the United States of America should become a standard-bearer for many more such collaborative ventures in diverse areas, both at the North-South and the South-South level.

I congratulate the organizers for holding this Congress at a very critical juncture when our planet is grappling with the fundamental problems of hunger, food security and sustainable development. As we step into the 21st Century, let us resolve to eradicate hunger and poverty from our planet. Let us enhance the dedicated and collective efforts of our agricultural scientists, polity-makers and farmers to attain this cherished goal. I wish the Congress all success in its deliberations.

Information Dissemination — Essential for Agricultural Productivity

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. It is a happy coincidence that the establishment of your Society coincided with the dawn of the era of freedom and renewal in India.

Our national leaders were deeply conscious of the centrality of agriculture and the rural sector in our economy, indeed, in the life of our nation. Mahatma Gandhi had said on 12 July 1945: “Just as the universe is contained in the self, so is India contained in the village”. On several occasions, while referring to eighty-five per cent of India’s population which lived in the villages, Bapu had stressed the need to remove the “deep and ever-deepening poverty among the masses”.

A similar sentiment was expressed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, then Minister of Food, while presiding over the first annual meeting of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics on 11 December 1947 :

“The greatest problem with which India is faced is the problem of food, but when we approach that problem with the view to finding a solution, the very first difficulty which we meet is the lack of statistical knowledge . . .”

The Government of free India was acutely aware that India would prosper and progress only if her village life was transformed. It was, thus, natural for our rural sector to receive priority national focus and attention.

During the five decades after Independence, our agricultural sector has received sustained attention. Agrarian reforms initiated in the 1950s and the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s sought to effect a material improvement in the lives of the people in vast regions of our country. The use of high-yielding varieties of

seeds, particularly of wheat and some other foodgrains, has been possible because the importance of harnessing science and technology in agricultural production is increasingly being appreciated.

We are also developing a reliable and wide-ranging information base comprising a critical input in policy formulation and decision-making in agricultural growth. The lack of statistical knowledge, which Rajendra Babu referred to in 1947 has been made up for, to an appreciable extent.

Yet, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels and remain complacent. The Green Revolution needs to be sustained. The rapid growth of our population has eroded some of the fruits of the Green Revolution and even today there is widespread malnutrition and undernourishment in our population. The urgent task before us is to maintain the momentum generated by the Green revolution. We have to expand the spatial spread of high-yielding varieties of seeds, develop new and more productive seeds for different crops, devise more efficient cropping patterns, sustainable and sensitive to agro-climatic conditions of specific regions of our country. We also have to enhance production in related areas of agriculture, including animal husbandry, horticulture, floriculture and aquaculture. The immense possibilities which exist in the field of bio-technology and tissue culture need to be tapped fully. Furthermore, efforts to strengthen the links between industry and agriculture, through the development of agro-processing industries, require to be stepped up.

The continuing challenges faced in our agricultural sector call for a corresponding effort by our scientific community to intensify their research and understanding of the diverse factors which impinge on agricultural development. We need to further improve and expand the impressive existing resource base of agricultural statistics. I understand that the development of statistical techniques for data generation together with computer technology have resulted in major advances in our understanding of the ground realities in this sector and in the evaluation of policy options. Greater refinement and improvement in existing methodologies have closed information gaps in a situation where the environmental, technological and economic factors are rapidly changing.

We should encourage the application of computer simulation techniques, better forecasting techniques and remote sensing technology in our efforts for sustainable development in the

agricultural sector. Such devices and mechanisms can play a vital role in the development of early warning systems whereby the effects of pests and diseases on crops could be known in advance, and thus controlled. These also assist in a more accurate estimation of the output and productive patterns. It is, therefore, essential to promote close and intensive collaboration between our institutions for agricultural research and statistics as well as those dealing with space technology and meteorological observations.

In addition to focussing on high technology areas for data collection and analysis, we must try and ensure that the actual cultivator, the tiller of the soil, is himself encouraged to collect and maintain statistics relating to his own arable land. Extension workers should be of assistance to our farmers in this area since it would enable them in adopting a more informed approach to farming, where each individual farmer could draw and improve upon his earlier experience. We should enlist the support of Panchayati Raj institutions in this task. Our agricultural universities too, could undertake pilot projects in some villages.

Another area in which your Society could play a role is in the dissemination of the results of statistical analysis in a manner which is easy to comprehend. This information must reach the cultivators, extension agencies and Government departments which are most directly involved in the work of enhancing productivity and output in the rural sector. Here again, we should fully seize the opportunities provided by Panchayati Raj mechanisms which could become catalysts for transmitting information and knowledge for enhancing productivity and ensuring sustainability of our agricultural production.

It is the quality of our human resources which determines the strength of our systems and programmes. India is proud of her vast pool of highly technical trained manpower. The calibre and competence of our professionals in diverse spheres, particularly, in the areas of science and technology, mathematics, statistics and computer software, is recognized throughout the world. Dr. G.R. Seth is an eminent statistician who has been honoured with the Sankhiyaki Bhushan Award for his contributions of immense value in the field of agricultural statistics. I extend to him my cordial felicitations.

The Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute has rendered invaluable service in promoting research, education and

training in the area of agricultural statistics and in the application of information technology to this important sphere of endeavour. The Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, through its annual conferences and other activities, provides an important forum for an exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences among research scholars, students and other professionals. I congratulate all those associated with these institutions.

With these words I am happy to inaugurate the fiftieth annual conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics and wish your deliberations all success.

Scientific Knowledge — Not a Commodity

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the Jubilee Centre of the Indian National Science Academy. I thank the organizers for their thoughtful invitation to me. I am glad that a new building complex with modern, state-of-the-art facilities has been constructed. I am sure it would facilitate a more intensive interaction and exchanges among scientists in India and abroad. This complex is yet another landmark in the building of a science and technology infrastructure essential for the pursuit of scientific inquiry and research.

The motto of the Indian National Science Academy is :

“हयामि भर्गःसवितुर्वरेण्यम्”

(Strive for what destroys evil, is luminescent and good)

It states in clear and unambiguous terms the objective of science. It is a quest for Truth. It embodies a striving for greater understanding of the mysteries of nature and the universe. It is this eternal quest, propelled by human curiosity which has influenced the development of science and technology throughout the world.

In India, even during ancient times, our sages and scholars had grappled with spiritual and temporal matters relating to the life of man on earth. A spirit of inquiry based on rational thought, logic and experimentation governed human, scientific and spiritual endeavour. This beautiful saying captures the spirit of our tradition :

“शास्त्र प्रयोजनं तत्त्व दर्शनं”

(The object of science is the realization of Truth.)

The same approach was reflected in the Buddhist philosophy which exhorted that hypotheses be verified and tested before they are accepted. Shantarakshita's *Tatvasangraha* contains this telling verse :

“तापाच् छेदाच् च निकषात् सुवर्णमिव पंडितै : ।
परीक्ष्य मद्बुचो ग्राह्यं भिक्षवो न तु गौरवात् ॥”

(Just as experts melt, beat and test gold for its purity, so also, O bhikkhus, examine my own teachings in diverse ways. Accept them only if you find them to be valid. Do not accept them without examining them, simply because they are my teachings.)

It was this tradition, creative, dynamic, progressive, and free from dogma, which led to some of the greatest scientific discoveries in India. The decimal system and the symbol 'zero' were seminal contributions of the Vedic period. During later times, some of our famous mathematicians and astronomers, including Varahamihira, Brahmagupta, Bhaskara and Aryabhatta, made discoveries which have enhanced our understanding of the universe. In medicine, the classic treatises of Ayurveda, the *Susruta* and *Charaka Samhitas* contains a vast storehouse of medical knowledge. The perfection attained in the field of metallurgy can be witnessed from the magnificent Iron Pillar in Delhi which has been rust-free for more than one and a half millennia. The Jain philosophers had developed a very profound theory of the 'atom' more than two millennia ago. I have cited only a few of the innumerable contributions of Indian philosophers and scientists to human knowledge.

A flourishing tradition of scientific endeavour within our country was matched by a vigorous exchange of knowledge and ideas with other civilizations. India contributed to, and in turn, benefitted from this interaction which resulted in a dynamic expansion of the frontiers of human knowledge.

Unfortunately, over the ages, and primarily due to colonial subjugation, India was unable to maintain and further develop the momentum of her scientific endeavours. Though there were some remarkable discoveries and contributions by men of vision and foresight such as J.C. Bose, C.V. Raman, Meghnad Saha as well as by eminent individuals such as Jamshedji Tata, who founded the Indian Institute of Science, there were no coordinated and sustained efforts to harness the fruits of science and technology to improve the well-being of her people. Unlike the countries of Europe where the Industrial Revolution ushered in the age of steam and steel, and demonstrated in a profound manner the immense potential of science in enhancing the quality of life, India, during colonial rule, missed the Industrial Revolution, the age of technology, invention and innovation.

It is only after Independence that we have again begun to make advances in diverse areas of science and technology. The credit, in substantial measure, is due to our visionary leader, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was acutely aware that it is only through science that India can emerge from the shackles of poverty, hunger and disease. In his address to the Indian Sciences Congress on 26th December, 1937, he had said :

“It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening customs and traditions, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.”

Panditji drafted the Science Policy Resolution of 1958, which outlined our core national objectives thus :

“It is only through the scientific approach and method and the use of scientific knowledge that reasonable material and cultural amenities and services can be provided for every member of the community . . . The wealth and prosperity of a nation depend on the effective utilization of its human and material resources through industrialization. The use of human material for industrialization demands its education in science and training in technical skills. . . . Science has developed at an ever-increasing pace since the beginning of the century, so that the gap between the advanced and the backward countries has widened more and more. It is only by adopting the most vigorous measures and putting forward our utmost effort into the development of science that we can bridge the gap.”

Modern India has made significant progress in achieving the objectives outlined by the Science Policy Resolution. A spectacular contribution of science is the Green Revolution. The development and utilization and high-yielding varieties of seeds for wheat—the interface between lab and land has shown how the problem of poverty and hunger, the most basic issues facing our society, can be resolved by the harnessing science and technology. India has also made significant headway in high-technology areas. The advances made in the field of space technology, satellite technology, defence technology, the promotion of nuclear energy and developments in the fields of oceanography and electronics, the frontier areas of science, have taken India to the front ranks of nations of the world.

These achievements have been made possible by the pool of highly trained technical manpower which we have nurtured. Today, India has a vast infrastructure of educational institutions offering the best training and knowledge in various areas of pure sciences, applied sciences, engineering, medicine and technology. Our scientists are second to none. They have excelled not merely in India but in several countries abroad. We are proud of our scientists.

The Indian National Science Academy, as the apex institution of scientists, is rendering valuable service to the promotion of science in our society and in developing what Panditji frequently referred to as “scientific temper” among the people. Through its diverse programmes and activities it is promoting and recognizing outstanding contributions in science, nurturing young scientists and encouraging exchanges and interaction among scientists both in India and abroad. It provides a forum for discussion of the vital issues and concerns facing our society. Its interaction with the Government has contributed to significant progress in vital areas such as health, food, energy, water, transport, communication and environment. I congratulate the distinguished fellows of the Academy and all those who have associated with it.

As we move into the fiftieth year of our Independence and prepare to step into the next century, it is essential to adapt our scientific policy and endeavours to changing global realities. On the one hand, there are immense opportunities for more intensive and enhanced scientific exchanges following the onset of the information and communications revolution. On the other, there are concerted efforts for limiting such interchange of knowledge and experience by subordinating it to commercial or strategic considerations. Knowledge has become a tradable commodity. It can be

obtained, but only at a price. New international arrangements have been set in order to govern intellectual property issues. We have also witnessed efforts to patent knowledge which has been known to human civilization since antiquity. We must remain vigilant against such efforts.

Our strategy must be carefully defined and implemented in order to safeguard our national interests. On the one hand, we must intensify our efforts for a more free exchange of scientific knowledge while on the other, taking into account global realities, we must step up our own research and development activities. Greater focus is required particularly in areas in which India has a comparative advantage, such as solar or wind energy, nuclear power based on thorium and information technology.

At a time of economic reform and restructuring, when the private sector is shouldering a greater responsibility in the economic arena, it is essential that they also enhance and strengthen their research and development programmes. It is only through innovation and the application of science and technology, that we can improve the quality of our products and hence withstand competition. In addition to in-house research and development, our industry should extend greater financial support to the work of our scientific institutions. The Indian National Science Academy is well-placed to play a role in strengthening the industry-science interface as well as in providing substantive inputs into Government policy-making for the further development of science and technology capabilities in India.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Jubilee Centre of the Indian National Science Academy. I thank the organizers for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on this occasion.

VII

DEFENCE

No Development without Security

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you today at I.N.S. Utkrosh. Your presence here is part of the constant vigil maintained by our armed forces to ensure India's security. The high standard of discipline and readiness of this station is manifest and I commend you all for your dedication.

These Islands and seas around them are part of an ocean unique in being named after a nation—India. This, in itself, is an acknowledgement of our maritime traditions. Centuries ago, our traders have traversed these very waters on their way to Kamboja and China. This region has seen the movement of mighty fleets from the Coromandel Coast, which earned great glory for the nation. These seas have also been a passage for our culture and religions, which left their imprint on other societies. In our long history, our domination of the waters around us assured the security of India.

Independence brought with it the realisation that without security, there can be no development. Our past taught us to value strong and effective forces. Our long coastline demanded one. And the challenges of 1965 and 1971 further underlined its importance. Our military capabilities have been a positive factor in maintaining security and stability. As Pandit Nehru noted in 1948 when welcoming I.N.S. Delhi, "One has to have the strength to keep peace, and sometimes, to make others keep peace."

The security of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, being on the border, is vital to India. The presence of the units of all three Services and the Coast Guard here ensure this. But security is no longer only *vis-a-vis* a defined enemy. Activities of terrorist and anti-national forces have to be combated. The protection of our marine resources has to be ensured. Off-shore oil discoveries and the prospect of sea-bed exploitation have added to the responsibility of our defence forces. Greater vigilance is the need of the hour.

The Ocean is today a uniting factor. Like continents, they become the framework for cooperation among States. Such a process is underway in the Pacific Ocean and has begun in the Indian Ocean. The visit here of five other navies indicates the

cooperation and understanding that is taking shape. Our defence capacity will help provide the peace and stability necessary for this region's development.

In the modern era, inter-services coordination holds the key to military success. This was demonstrated in 1971. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have a special contribution to make in promoting the spirit of joint operations. I am very glad this is reflected in the composition of the personnel I am addressing.

India is today poised to become a major power, whose voice can no longer be ignored. We seek our rightful place in the councils of the world, as a strong and confident nation. Your efforts and commitment will ensure that India remains capable of securing our vital interests. The nation deeply appreciates your service and sacrifice and stands fully behind you.

Military Technology Vital

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be at the headquarters of the Eastern Command of the Indian Navy. I extend to all of you my warm greetings and good wishes. The discipline, commitment and readiness I see around me is most impressive and reflects your dedication to our nation's security.

The Navy has a proud record of service in times of peace and war. The spectacular action at Karachi in 1971 won the admiration of one and all. Since Independence, the Eastern Command has made an important contribution to the securing of our national goals. In 1971, its efforts had a critical bearing on our victory in Bangladesh. It was here that the enemy's attempt to sink our aircraft carrier was foiled and their submarine destroyed. I am confident that the forces of this Command will respond with the same vigour and decisiveness if India's security is threatened once again.

Our Navy shoulders a major share of the responsibility in maintaining India's security and protecting national interests. Our long coastline and large maritime resources demand that we have

such capabilities as are necessary to maintain peace and stability. This is in the larger interest of our region to which we have a special responsibility. Let us not forget that the ocean to our South bears the name of India.

The East Coast of India has an important place in our maritime traditions. For centuries, our ships have sailed from the Coromandel to Cambodia and the China Sea. Transmitting our culture and religions, they also made India a force to reckon with in global commerce. However, the neglect of naval power over the years led to foreign dominance of the waters around us and to two centuries of colonialism. If India is to realize its manifest destiny, we must ensure that this never happens again.

The Ocean provides a uniting fabric, creating the framework for cooperation among the littoral states. Our sincere efforts have led to significant progress in recent years in the growth of such associations in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Yet, to our regret, in some quarters old animosities continue to fester, resurfacing in new forms. Our extended hand of friendship has only met with a clenched fist. Those who waged war against India in the past now unabashedly wage terrorism. Instead of being condemned, they are sought to be rewarded by fresh supplies of weapons and military technology. This poses new challenges for national security and particularly for our Navy. As firmly as in the past, we must spare no efforts in responding to the challenges posed.

Military technology is as important as the human spirit in determining the course of war. As weaponry becomes more sophisticated, effective inter-service coordination holds the key to success. This was the lesson of the Karachi operations in 1971, a lesson which we must build further upon.

Today, it is vital that our armed forces constantly upgrade their capabilities commensurate with threat perceptions. We must stay abreast of global technology advancements and harness fully our domestic talents and resources. It is vital that the quest for self-reliance is pursued without compromise.

We have, in the last five decades, made impressive strides in developing national capabilities. By doing so, we have emerged as a voice of stability and responsibility in the councils of the world. This needs greater appreciation. It should also be realized that independent India cannot accept policies of creating divisions and

artificial regional balances or be party to agreements and norms which are selectively applied. Nor can we acquiesce in discriminatory arrangements, be they political, economic, technological or military, which seek to deny us our rightful position.

My visit to this Command underlines the nation's deep appreciation of the spirit of service, professionalism and total dedication of the Indian Navy, and indeed, the Indian Armed Forces. We see our armed forces as a symbol of national integration, reflecting the absolute commitment to and participation of all our people in national defence. Smt. Indira Gandhi said of the Armed Forces : "Part of their strength lies in the strength of their arms. The other part lies in the strength and support of a strong and united people standing behind them." Our unity is the source of strength and courage as we march forward. Let me assure you that in facing the challenges ahead, you have the complete support of the people of India. Be confident that the nation stands fully behind you and let that confidence display itself in the discharge of your important duties.

Navy : In the Defence of National Interests

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be on board the INS Viraat for the Presentation of Colours to the Western Fleet.

The Western Fleet is a premier fleet of the Indian Navy, with a tradition of valour and courage in the service of our motherland, during war and peace. It covered itself with glory during the 1971 operations in the Arabian Sea. Professionalism, determination, devotion to duty and the pursuit of excellence have been the hallmarks of this fighting force. On this occasion I felicitate all serving and retired personnel of the Western Fleet and of the Indian Navy for their contributions in making our nation vibrant, strong and united.

As an ancient sea-faring nation with a vast coastline, India

has a long experience of naval power and prowess. The *Rig Veda*, the oldest extant scripture, refers to boats with a hundred oars — “शतारित्रं नावमातस्थिवांसम्” Our ships have facilitated a flourishing trade of products and commodities and a dynamic exchange of ideas, cultures and philosophies which have expanded the horizons of human thought and have contributed to the greater good of all humankind. They have been carriers of India’s message of peace and goodwill.

During the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji the Great, a very carefully thought out effort was made to build a navy with a clearly defined sphere of action in this region. The name of Kanhoji Angre is famous in our history for his leadership, patriotism and the successes he registered in numerous naval engagements.

In the five decades of freedom, the Indian Navy has developed into a multi-dimensional service with separate air and submarine arms. It has expanded and increased in size, structure and composition. Progressively our force is being indigenised. Today we can be proud of our professional naval force and of its magnificent contribution to national security.

And yet, there can be no room for complacency. We cannot rest on our laurels. It is essential, particularly at this moment in our history when we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our Independence, to make an objective assessment of the manner and the magnitude in which our naval forces should grow. What are the lessons we can derive from our experience after Independence? What are the challenges our nation would face in the next century?

I foresee that the Navy will assume a more enhanced role in the defence of national interests, in the years ahead. Major regional and global developments will have a bearing on the new and diverse responsibilities which the Navy will be called upon to shoulder. The world has witnessed growing trends towards integration, both at the regional and international levels. In our own region, SAARC has recently made operational its preferential trading arrangements and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation has been established.

As our economy matures and moves on a higher growth path, and as it becomes more open and participates more fully and on an equal footing in the world economy, foreign trade and investment

will assume a more significant dimension in our economic processes. Of primary importance would be the goal of ensuring security and safety of our trade and mercantile interests and keeping open the sea-lanes, particularly for vital inputs such as energy supplies for our economy.

It has been said that the twenty-first century will be the century of the Oceans—the last great frontier with vast untapped potential of fisheries, minerals and plant resources. Already, several nations and multinational consortia have secured allocation of mine sites in the deep-sea bed. India is among these pioneer investors who have retrieved manganese nodules from the ocean floor. Similarly, we are active participants in the exploration of, and scientific research and development in, Antarctica.

To meet the numerous and diverse requirements of the future, it is essential to develop a multi-dimensional and balanced navy with adequate capabilities in the submarine, surface and air operations. In an area marked by rapid technological advances, where equipment is faced with quick obsolescence, it is necessary to strengthen efforts for modernizing our Navy to ensure that it becomes a world class navy. A multi-pronged strategy involving cooperation with other countries as well as stepping up indigenous R&D efforts and enhancing ship-building capacity and capabilities should be pursued vigorously.

I am reminded of what Smt. Indira Gandhi had said while commissioning the first India-built frigate, INS Nilgiri on 3 June 1972:

“We speak of three forces. But Defence production is the fourth force. And unless the fourth force is strong, the other three cannot give of their best and a country cannot be truly strong.”

As I indicated in my address at the opening of Parliament earlier this year, the Government is committed to the modernization of the Navy on an urgent basis and several steps to upgrade and equip the Navy are being undertaken.

It is the personnel of any institution which determines the quality and contribution of that institution in the attainment of national goals and protection of national interests. The navy is no exception. Our officers and sailors are known for their high degree of competence, professionalism and devotion to duty. We have a young and highly qualified Navy. Through constant training on

modern and up-to-date equipment the professional capabilities of our sailors should be enhanced and upgraded on a continuing basis.

Our sailors meet the rigours of a hard and difficult life at sea, cheerfully and without complaint. As I look around, I see bright, enthusiastic and confident faces. I see the face of young India, the India of the twenty-first century. The Navy is truly a national institution, representing the glorious diversity and the essential oneness of India.

As in the past, our Navy will be a factor for peace and stability in our region and, indeed, the world. We build our strength in the cause of maintaining and safeguarding peace. The Indian ethos is one of peace and non-violence. Our deep and abiding conviction is that durable prosperity and progress is feasible only in an atmosphere of peace. India is prepared to explore ways and means of forging and sustaining the peace in our neighbourhood.

We have always come to the assistance of friendly countries. The Western Fleet rendered timely help in the Maldives and Sri Lanka in their hour of need. It has participated in a commendable manner in the UN Peace-Keeping Operation in Somalia. Acting as ambassadors of goodwill on visits to ports in the Indian Ocean littoral, the Western Fleet has earned universal admiration and respect.

The Colours that have been presented to the Western Fleet today, symbolize the honour, the courage and sense of commitment of the Indian Navy. When the President's Colours were presented to the Indian Navy for the first time by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 27 May 1951, he had said :

“It is of the utmost importance that they [the Navy] should stand steadfastly as the ever-vigilant sentinels of peace and freedom of this ancient land.”

I would like to reiterate that exhortation to you today.

The nation is proud of the Indian Navy and stands behind its valiant sailors in their sacred task of protecting and defending our motherland. I wish the Indian Navy success and glory. May you go from strength to strength as a force for peace, national security and advancement.

RIMC : Preparing Students For Defence Services

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to participate in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Rashtriya Indian Military College, a premier educational institution in our country which has imparted quality education to several generations of students. During the 75 years of its existence, the RIMC has gained recognition and renown. Those who have had the good fortune of passing through its portals have reached the highest levels in their spheres of service. Their valiant deeds have won them national honours, distinctions and awards. They have added lustre to the good name of their Alma Mater.

From ostrich plumes to peacock feathers, the RIMC has adapted to the vicissitudes of time and circumstance, effectively and with ease. The RIMC has remained steadfast in its core goal of preparing meritorious students for a career in our defence services. Your name has become synonymous with excellence in the field of education.

Mahatma Gandhi often said that education is character-building. It is the process of inculcating the universal, moral and ethical values of human civilization and thus equipping children to face the challenges of the real world. It should enable children to set high standards and norms for themselves and instil in them an intense desire to live up to these principles. It must foster a quest for perfection in an imperfect world. I am reminded of some words of William Shakespeare which articulate this profound thought thus :

“This above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

The importance of school lies not merely in the transmittal of book knowledge or making a child literate and physically fit. A school, particularly, a residential school such as the RIMC, should and does provide a total experience to a child. It is a reflection of society in miniature with guidelines and rules which are better and more clearly defined and strictly implemented. Such a community

functions under the gentle and benevolent guidance of the teachers. The school should offer a conducive atmosphere in which children interact amongst themselves, learn from each other and from their collective experience at work and at play. It should provide an environment where children can develop their innate talents and aptitudes, discover the joys of learning and physical activity and thereby develop their individual personalities.

It is at school that a child first becomes aware of the joys and pains of friendship, the values of trust and honesty, and the importance of duty and responsibility. Every activity in school is part of the process of learning and growing up, whether it is study, sports, or simply living in the dormitory, and has a profound impact on the development of the character of the student.

The courses of study kindle the inherent curiosity of the child and sharpen and intellect. The physical training programmes, sports and games, foster discipline, team spirit and sportsmanship, a sense of fair play and justice. They encourage friendly competition and the pursuit of excellence. It is on the playing fields that the ability to be a good team-player and leadership qualities come to the fore. Adventure sports, such as mountaineering and rafting in which the RIMC excels, provide an opportunity to instill physical courage and endurance and develop a sense of fearlessness among children.

Living in an environment away from home and family enables the child to become independent, self-confident and self-reliant. It toughens the child who learns to bear with criticism and injustice. It motivates him to defend his rights, and more importantly, to fight for the rights of others. Children learn the values of compromise and give and take. They begin to appreciate the reality that they cannot always have their own way on every issue and it is a greater thing to show consideration for others.

More so than in other institutions, in a residential school, the teachers have a profound influence on the development of the personality of children. They assume the role of a surrogate parent and provide succour, support and sympathy to the child. They are not merely teachers in the western sense of the term. Rather, they are “gurus” who teach by their own example and conduct. It has been said : “Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.” It is the

teachers who play the role of catalysts in bringing out the full personality of the child. They shoulder a very onerous responsibility which must be discharged with full dedication.

The presence of a large number of Rimcollians today testifies to the strong attachment of students to their school. Each one of you must have lasting memories of your experiences at the RIMC. Many of you have reached the pinnacle of your careers. You have received numerous awards and decorations which are a credit not merely to your own efforts but to the firm grounding in the education imparted at the RIMC. I congratulate the RIMC for providing society with men of character, vision and dedication in diverse sectors of human endeavour.

I extend a special welcome to the distinguished alumni of the RIMC who have travelled from abroad, and specially from Pakistan, to participate in these celebrations. I have had the honour and pleasure of knowing some of you personally. Your visit is significant. Our two countries share similar traditions and values. We are all trained to uphold timeless moral and ethical values absorbed by each one of us at school. I believe that it is these values which should govern the relationship not merely between man and man but also between nations. The countries of the sub-continent have common battles to fight against Poverty, Ignorance and Disease. We aspire for the shared goals of prosperity, peace and happiness. These can be achieved if we join hands in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding and work together for the welfare of our peoples.

As we prepare to step into the 21st century, I am sure that the RIMC and those entrusted with administering it are giving thought to ways and means of enhancing the contribution of the RIMC to our society. I would like to make two suggestions for your consideration. First, it would be useful to provide the benefits of your educational facilities to a larger number of students. Without lowering your standards in any manner I would urge you to examine possibilities for expansion. Second, we must prepare to meet the challenges of the 21st century when modern communications and information technology will influence every sphere of human life. It is, therefore, important to equip and train our students in these areas.

I would like to conclude with some words of advice given to cadets by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 7 December 1956.

He had said :

“You should not only aspire to achieve the highest honour but also to render service to the helpless and support those who need such support; and you may in course of time show to the world that India is not only good in fighting but also in maintaining peace.”

May these valuable words be your constant beacon and illumine the path which you tread. I wish you glory and success and a fulfilling and productive life in the service of the people.

VIII
INDIA AND THE
WORLD

Nelson Mandela : A Toast to Spirit of Freedom

IT GIVES ME great happiness to welcome in our midst today the First Head of State of free, democratic and multi-racial South Africa. On behalf of the people of India, I extend a very warm and cordial welcome to your Excellency and to your Delegation.

We had the pleasure of welcoming you, President Mandela, in this country in 1990. You had just been freed from 27 years of incarceration. Your uncompromising opposition, all these years, to apartheid evoked great admiration. It symbolised the inevitable destruction of a system which denied people their most basic rights. Our support for your just cause was reiterated through the conferment of India's highest award, the *Bharat Ratna*, which you were gracious enough to accept.

Today, Excellency, we welcome you as the leader of a victorious struggle which marks the end of an era begun by the independence of India. We have long recognised that our freedom movement was part of the global struggle of oppressed humanity against colonialism. The Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, had his political baptism in South Africa. Non-cooperation, as a form of political struggle, was born in your homeland and culminated in ours. It is appropriate that freedom and democracy in South Africa dawned on the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Our bonds, Excellency, have been forged in those years when you struggled for your freedom, while we mobilised international opinion in your support. We raised the issue of apartheid in the United Nations and broke off diplomatic relations with racist South Africa because we sincerely believed that your cause was ours too. This belief we reaffirm today, as we support your efforts at reconciliation and reconstruction.

Jawaharlal Nehru said in March 1947, "We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to their rightful place in the human family. The freedom that we envisage is not to be confined to this nation or that, or to a

particular people, but must be spread out over the whole human race." To you, our neighbours across the ocean, we extend our hand in solidarity, friendship and cooperation once again. We look forward to building a strong bilateral relationship which will reflect our common heritage and our shared aspirations.

It is a matter of satisfaction that our two Governments have decided to establish a Joint Commission which will provide the framework for this cooperation. Our ties in various fields have made substantial progress recently. Our bilateral trade agreement will accelerate this trend. The direct air link between our two countries must now be followed by the expansion of shipping links as well. Our cooperation in the field of defence is also promising. As we move to a new era of friendship, the Indian community in South Africa serves as an important bridge.

As nations linked by the Indian Ocean, we look forward to close regional cooperation which can develop into an institutionalised arrangement. We have noted the progress made by the South African Development Community and see in it a significant force for the furtherance of democracy and stability in the region.

Excellency, we have been following with deep interest the debate in South Africa on the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Your endeavours in evolving a national consensus on vital issues facing South Africa is widely respected. As a society which values pluralism and diversity, we support your vision of the new South Africa.

Excellency, your visit is a landmark in the ties between our two countries. We have shared both the tragedy of colonialism and triumph of the free human spirit. Today, we stand together, united in our determination to realise common goals.

May I request you, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, to join me in a toast:

- to the health and happiness of His Excellency President Nelson Mandela,
- to the eternal friendship of India and south Africa, and
- to the triumph of human dignity and freedom.

Sanskrit — An Eternal Ocean of Knowledge

I AM VERY grateful for the honour conferred on me by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati, and by all of you with so much affection. I accept the Honorary Degree of Mahamahopadhyaya given by the Vidyapeetha with the utmost humility and happiness.

This gathering at Rashtrapati Bhavan is a testimony to the greatness of the Sanskrit language. The honour conferred on me in recognition of my studies only reflects the importance of this language. It has been my good fortune that, from the very beginning, I have had the opportunity to study Sanskrit. Even now, my quest to measure the depth of this unfathomable sea continues. It is the unique characteristic of this literature that the more one immerses oneself in it, the more there is to immerse. Sanskrit is of course, the essence of India. Indeed, Sanskrit works are the one contribution which we can present with confidence before the entire world.

Scholars of all nations have regarded the works in Sanskrit as the oldest source of human learning. Western scholars accept the *Rig Veda* as the first literary composition and as a great gift of India to the world. Whether it is philosophy or spiritual understanding, comparative linguistics or ancient culture, Sanskrit is necessary for their understanding and study. Panini's grammar is, indisputably, the greatest grammar in the world. Sanskrit is regarded by scientists abroad as the language most appropriate for computers. This testifies to its completeness and to its scientific basis. It is a matter of particular pride that in the last two centuries, different facets of Sanskrit have been the subject of extraordinary research by Western scholars. There can be no greater proof of the universal nature of this language. Eternal in nature, Sanskrit is not limited by time. The Vedas were published for the first time in Germany. Today, many nations pursue teaching and research in Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is the oldest among languages and yet, the most modern. It has been relevant to human progress from ancient

times and is even more so now. Today, the development of a global feeling for oneness of humanity is the greatest necessity. The *Prithvi Sukta* of the *Atharva Veda* proclaims—

“माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथ्वीयाः”

(The Earth is my Mother and I am the Son of the World.)

The same Veda also speaks of —

“यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकरूपम्” और “यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम्”

(It thus envisages the oneness of our globe, even as it establishes that the world is but one home.)

These thoughts, enunciated by the Vedas, have progressed further with times. It has been said—

“उदारचरितानान्तु वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्”

(The wise regard the whole world as one family.)

Concepts of tolerance, co-existence, dignity and welfare are deeply rooted in the Veda. A long time ago, the *Upanishad* stated—

“समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समाना
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति।”

(Let our deliberations, assemblies, thinking, feelings and minds be common.)

The *Upanishad* also enjoins—

“सह नाववतु सह नौ भुनक्तु सह वीर्यं करवावहै,
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु, मा विद्विषावहै।”

(Let us walk together, eat together, and work together in pursuit of noble objectives. Let our personalities always shine, and let us put envy aside.)

It is on such noble ideals that world peace and brotherhood can be built. Such messages or advice are not the prerogative of any particular nation, race, class or time but transcend limitations. It is to the credit of Sanskrit that it has produced a culture of sacrifice and of selfless dedication. It has promoted the realisation

that the world is centered around the Supreme Being. It has led to a realisation that the wealth of others must not be coveted and that giving and sharing is of importance. The *Upanishad* states for example—

“ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं, यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा, मा गृधः कस्य स्विद् धनम्॥”

In today's materialistic world, the pursuit of mundane wealth has created dissatisfaction. But what better example of the true path can we find than in our Sanskrit heritage? It demonstrates the futility of the single-minded pursuit of wealth, which is the greatest problem of contemporary society.

Much can be said about the importance of the contribution of Sanskrit and of its different streams of knowledge and science. But I believe that this is not necessary before scholars of such eminence. Today, it is imperative that Sanskrit studies must advance and be encouraged. The Central and State Government have made considerable efforts in this direction, to the best of their capacities. But much more is required. Voluntary organisations, scholars, and lovers of Sanskrit must contribute to the acceleration of efforts to spread the language. The Minister of Human Resources Development, Shri Madhavrao Scindia has given leadership to the efforts of scholars to translate major works in regional languages into Sanskrit, as well as to translate Sanskrit literature into regional languages. Such endeavours will lead to mutual enrichment. Through mechanisms such as night classes, Sanskrit can be made accessible at the popular level. This will greatly benefit our nation.

I am familiar with the efforts of the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha at Tirupati. I have had occasion to personally visit this institution on two occasions. It has done commendable work in the propagation of Sanskrit, including through the publication of *Sam Veda* and *Aagam* literature, by producing tape recordings of Vedas, by conducting professional courses and preserving the art of classical teaching, and by training Sanskrit teachers. I believe that the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the UGC should now consider extending assistance for the establishment of a full-fledged Kendriya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya in the South.

Sanskrit is critical to our national unity. Investing in it is to invest in our national integrity and stability. It will lead to an enrichment of our regional languages and will strengthen the cultural bonds between our diverse people; the foundation of our nation.

With these words, I thank you all for gathering here today and for the honour which has been conferred on me. I regard the Mahamahopadhyaya as a blessing of Lord Venkateshwara and would like to conclude with these words —

“न त्वहं कामये राज्यं
न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम्।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां,
प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम्॥”

(I do not ask for Kingdom, Nor do I ask for Heaven, Not even for Redemption from Rebirth. All I desire is for life to be rid of Sorrows.)

India and Sri Lanka — Democracies Committed to Nurturing Diversity

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to welcome you all in our midst today. As an old and valued friend, we receive Your Excellency with particular warmth. Your visit provides an opportunity to strengthen the close ties between our two nations, and we wish you and members of your delegation a productive stay.

India and Sri Lanka share a range of ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural and historical ties. These bonds of commonality are enhanced by our proximity. We have long recognized the imperative of cordial and good neighbourly relations. Your visit is an occasion for us to share concerns, express views and strengthen understandings in a manner befitting our friendship.

Our two nations are part of a region wealthy in natural resources and talent, yet struggling to overcome problems of poverty. We both have a fundamental commitment towards economic growth and social development, and visualise in the improvement of the living standards of our people, our major goal. In this quest, India and Sri Lanka have been long-standing partners, with a legacy of mutually beneficial economic and commercial relations. Economic liberalisation in both countries have created new opportunities to harness the energies of our people. We therefore, look forward to an era of expanded cooperation.

Regional cooperation in South Asia has been a basic objective of our foreign policy. The challenges and problems we face are similar. The countries of our region can learn from one another and reinforce each other's efforts towards development. Trade, as a vehicle for economic growth and utilisation of limited resources, is now the focus of our joint endeavours. The early operationalisation of SAPTA will not only benefit us all directly but also create a climate for better understanding within the region. We look forward to holding the Eighth Meeting of the SAARC Heads of State or Government and to welcoming you here again on that occasion.

The bonds between India and Sri Lanka derive from shared aspirations and values which reflect our common heritage. We are countries with a multiplicity of languages, religions, customs and cultures. Their co-existence in harmony is our strength, forming the basis for vibrant composite cultures. Parochialism and chauvinism are foreign to our ethos and must be resisted. We must further the diversity which encourages pluralism and permeates our democratic outlook.

Violence and hate are enemies of all democracies. They breed intolerance and narrowness of thought, deny liberty and suppress freedom. Not even the noblest of ends can justify such means. Defeating the cult of violence is a common challenge before us. In doing so, let us remember this message of the *Dhammapada*:

“अक्कोधेन जिने कोधं असाधुं साधुना जिने।
जिने कदरियं दानेन सच्चेनालिकवादिनं॥”

(Conquer anger by absence of anger,
wickedness by absence of wickedness,
miserliness by liberality, and untruth by truth.)

Sri Lanka today seeks to overcome the consequences of long years of ethnic strife which have taken a heavy toll on its society. We note the impressive mandate Your Excellency secured for a just political resolution of the ethnic problem within the framework of a united and integral Sri Lanka. As a friendly neighbour, India is confident that under your stewardship, Sri Lanka will achieve peace and stability.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request all of you to rise and join me in a toast to :

- the health and well-being of our honoured guest, Her Excellency Mrs Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka;
- the prosperity and well-being of the people of Sri Lanka; and
- lasting, cordial and mutually beneficial friendship between Sri Lanka and India.

India for Cordial Relations with Iran

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to welcome you and members of your delegation to India. You come as honoured guests to a country which has a close relationship with Iran from times immemorial. Excellency, I do hope you have pleasant memories of your first visit, and would have an equally satisfying stay in our country on this occasion.

Excellency, our deep cultural and historical links provide a solid foundation on which to build a multi-faceted modern edifice. We can draw inspiration from our ancient contacts to consolidate a relationship based on understanding and mutual benefit. A significant beginning has been made, but the full potential of our ties is yet to be realised. I am confident that your visit, Excellency,

Banquet in honour of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, New Delhi, 17 April 1995

will provide the necessary impetus for cooperation in diverse fields. I believe the new capacities and capabilities developed in India and Iran can be used to meet our mutual requirements. This is both the challenge and the opportunity that lies ahead.

As developing nations facing similar problems, India and Iran share common perspectives on many issues. It is in our mutual interest that we consult closely in international fora so that our concerns are effectively articulated. We have both embarked on paths of national development which value self-reliance, growth with social justice and independence of action. We strive to take advantage of modern science and technology, even as we preserve our culture and traditions. I believe that both nations stand to gain from an exchange of our experiences and expertise.

Excellency, pluralism and diversity have been national characteristics of the people of India. We are proud of the multiplicity of religions, languages and customs in our society. We strive to not only accept diversity but actively encourage it to flourish, believing that it enriches our culture. Ancient civilizations like India and Iran have inherited intellectual and social traditions which overcome communalism, sectarianism and narrowness of thought. Ours is the responsibility to spread the message that all mankind are brethren and that the world is one, a message so eloquently expressed by the poet Sheikh Sa'di Shirazi:

“Bani aadam aaz-e-yak deegarand
Ke dar aafreenash ze yak jauharand
Chu uzv-ebadard awurud rozgaar
Digar uzv-ga-ra na manad qarar
Tu Kaz mehnat-c-digaran be ghami
Nishaayad Ke namat nehand aadmi”

(All human beings are organic parts of each other
Because their substance is one and the same
when one organ suffers pain
Other parts of the body become restless
If you are callous towards the sufferings of your fellows
You ought not to be called a man.)

Excellency, we believe in peace and international cooperation and we see it as necessary to pursue national reconstruction. We value a secure environment that allows the optimal use of scarce resources for the benefit of our people. It is for this reason that we have repeatedly extended our hand of friendship to all coun-

tries, and in particular, to our neighbours. Together with its South Asian neighbours, India seeks to develop concrete programmes of cooperation under the SAARC framework. We believe there is much that the South Asian countries can accomplish in areas of common concern.

Excellency, we recognise the importance of Iran and its contribution to fostering regional cooperation. We believe that non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the peaceful resolution of differences through dialogue are essential principles for the conduct of international relations. In this context, we are firmly convinced that cordial and cooperative India-Iran relations will promote peace, prosperity and security in our region and contribute to the welfare of humanity as a whole.

A Shared Heritage of Unity

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with all of you today as you celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Indian arrival in Trinidad and Tobago. The colourful parade we had the privilege of witnessing was truly a spectacle of beauty and variety. It reflected in full measure the vibrancy of rich cultural traditions preserved with so much care, and indeed, its growth and development through intermingling with other streams.

Nagar Site is a profound symbol of cultural and emotional synthesis and harmony. It is demonstrative of the highest values of unity and integrity which is at the core of our common heritage. On our Independence Day in 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru declared that "No nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action." It is that commitment to common endeavours and shared successes which I see reflected before me today.

I bring the warm and affectionate greetings of the people of India to their sisters and brothers here, whose forefathers came to this land 150 years ago. They left their motherland, friends and relations with hopes and ambitions, ready for the adventure of a better life. Arriving here, they toiled in inhospitable and sometimes

even inhuman conditions to build Trinidad and Tobago's economy. The hardships of indentured labour was only paralled by the bondage of their brethren from the African continent. Through sacrifice and determination, the Indian community eventually took their rightful place in this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Today, we salute the triumph of human spirit which made that possible.

In *Ramacharitamanas* of Tulsi Das, Ravana esconced on a sophisticated divine chariot faces the Supreme Divinity Shri Rama, standing on foot. Vibhishana, the devotee of the Supreme Divinity, points it out to Shri Rama, who replies:

“सुनहु सखा कह कृपानिधाना। जेहि जय होइ सो स्यंदन आना॥
सौरज धीरज तेहि रथ चाका। सत्य सील दृढ़ ध्वजा पताका॥”

(The most magnanimous Supreme Divinity Shri Rama said, “O my friend! The vehicle with which victory is achieved, is a different type of chariot. Valour and fortitude are the wheels of that chariot. The unshakeable virtuous conduct based on Truth is its pennant.”)

Your forefathers who brought *Ramacharitamanas* with them understood the significance of this message to their lives. Those following the Muslim faith found the same truth exemplified in the Holy Quran which was their dearest possession. The eventual triumph of Truth and Goodness is the message of all great religions. Your very progress here is its testimony and vindications.

Today, it gives us immense pleasure to see that the new generation is reaping the fruits sown by their ancestors. You celebrate Phagwa, Dilwai, Eid and Hosay with the same enthusiasm as Carnival and Emancipation Day. With Kajri, Chaitri and Birha resound the beats of Calypso and Steelpan. You are now proud and equal partners in the cultural, religious and educational development of this country. We, in India, wish you a prosperous, successful and joyous future.

Our presence here reiterates that even if the oceans do separate us, our hearts have remained ever so close. Just as we take pride in your progress, I have no doubt of your interest in and support for the development of India. Independence opened wide the gates for economic development, social progress and cultural

renaissance. The task of reconstruction has proceeded forward so that Indian can realize its full potential.

The democratic process, part of our ancient heritage, has consolidated our integrity and nationhood. It has provided a framework of stability in which the society has progressed. Remarkable growth of production in agriculture and industry, the establishment of scientific and technological institutions, the availability of a large pool of highly trained manpower and the expansion of social services are the dominant elements of India's changing profile. Achievements generate their own demands and expectations, and today an ambitious restructuring process is underway. It will make our presence felt in the world economy. India is resurgent, part of the new forces which will reshape the globe in the 21st century.

In a world which is coming ever closer, our concerns are similar and our endeavours shared. Our destinies are common and so too must be our successes and joys. To the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish prosperity and happiness. We, in India, will proudly watch your march of progress to ever greater heights.

India and Namibia Bound by Spirit of Freedom

I DEEM IT a great privilege to be invited to address the joint sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council of the Parliament of Namibia. To all the Hon'ble Members present here, I convey the greetings and good wishes of the Government, Parliament and the people of India.

"Those of us who have attained our independence have a duty to those who have not" proclaimed Indira Gandhi on Africa Day in May 1972. It was a most natural sentiment to be expressed in a country like India, which had itself experienced colonial rule for long years.

Your liberation struggle, Hon'ble Members, was of exceptional significance, as it was on Namibia's soil that colonialism chose to make its last futile but tenacious stand. We saw our support for your aspirations as a culmination of our own freedom movement. The solidarity we displayed was an obligation to our inner selves, an expression of our own deeply held faith in human dignity and freedom. The continuation of colonialism was an affront to our principles. It is, therefore, a matter of special privilege to address that legislature which is the symbol of the victorious decisive battle against imperial rule and which represents the final liberation of the mighty continent of Africa.

Hon'ble Members, speaking in our Parliament in December 1958, our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, warned the forces behind Apartheid of the worldwide opinion building against it. He referred to a proposal put forward by the racist regime to divide South West Africa and absorb part of it. He declared:

"It would be most dangerous and harmful for any area of Africa to be handed over to a country.... which is in complete breach of the principles of the UN Charter and the Human Rights Declaration.... and in violation of everything that the United Nations stands for."

Pandit Nehru had foreseen that your struggle would determine the path the world would follow. Victory of the struggle in Namibia would mean the decisive defeat of colonialism, racism and denial of basic human rights. It would mean a vindication and triumphant reaffirmation of the principles of the UN Charter. Indeed, Pandit Nehru envisaged your victorious struggle as taking humankind towards the goal of a just international order based on peace, friendship and cooperation for the good of all.

Hon'ble Members, in recognition of his contribution in leading your long struggle for human dignity and freedom from the bonds of colonialism, we had awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize 1990 to His Excellency President Sam Nujoma. We perceived Namibia, with his wise leadership, healing the wounds inflicted by Apartheid, following a policy of national reconciliation, and re-deeming its commitment to Democracy, Peace and Borthershood. We share with you the belief that these processes are vital for the rebuilding of every society emerging from the ravages of the colonial era.

As a land of many languages, ethnicities and religions, Namibia is building a polity on the principles of democracy, pluralism and harmony. These are mutually supportive concepts which reinforce values which inspired your quest for freedom. Indeed, these principles truly manifest freedom and liberty and are crucial for the forging of a national consensus essential for tasks of reconstruction.

Legislatures must embody the will of the people. The Parliament of Namibia has a very special responsibility as it must meet the hopes and expectations of the masses in the early years of freedom and Independence. Hon'ble Members, the task of national reconstruction may be no less difficult than the struggle for freedom itself. It demands the same intensity of commitment, marshalling of resources and selfless service to surmount the problems of poverty, ignorance and disease. To manage nation-building in an environment of stability is the real challenge of the post-colonial era. Namibia can show the way.

As we view the world, the challenges before us are interspersed with opportunities. It is up to us to shape the future. The end of colonialism means that we are no longer helpless objects of a grand design conceived by others. We are and must grow as confident participants in a global process of correcting historical imbalances and fashioning a new world.

To realize our common goals, we must bring to bear the same spirit and commitment exemplified by our freedom struggles. The same resolve against injustice, the same degree of courage and clarity of vision which inspired us then must guide us now. Today, we face the future with the confidence of having succeeded in achieving freedom against tremendous odds. Additionally, we have now the resources and the freedom to organize ourselves to secure our goals and interests.

As united today as they have been in the past, India and Namibia view the world with eyes of friendship. We see the nations and peoples of the world as interdependent, with a fundamental mutuality of interest and commonality of concerns. Our solidarity stems from a recognition of the oneness of humankind and the message of One World so eloquently expressed by Jawaharlal Nehru at the very moment of our Independence.

He said: "Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments."

Let us strive together to realize this vision.

Hon'ble Members, May I thank you once again for the great honour done to me and my country in giving me the privilege of addressing this august and historic assembly in your great country.

India – Zimbabwe Joint Efforts for Human Progress

IT IS INDEED a great pleasure to be in your beautiful country and experience the warmth of your fraternal friendship. On behalf of my family and delegation, may I thank you Excellency for your generous hospitality and the many kind courtesies extended to us.

India and Zimbabwe have a long tradition of close and cordial relations. During the era of the Munhumutapa Kingdom, Indian merchants established strong links with your country, trading in textiles, minerals and metals. Sons of the royal house of Munhumutapa journeyed to India to broaden their education. In the 17th century, a great son of Zimbabwe, Dom Miguel - Prince, Priest and Professor, and heir to the imperial throne of the Muitapas - stayed and studied in Goa in India. An inscribed pillar stands today at a chapel in Goa, a tribute to his intellectual stature.

In contemporary times, Excellency, our ties have been forged during the historic struggle waged by nations and peoples of the South against colonialism. Great leaders of India's struggle for freedom viewed this task in the larger perspective of the cause of freedom and human dignity for the people of all nations. Indeed, the securing of liberty in Africa, Latin America and Asia was regarded as essential for freedom, as a condition, to be real and meaningful. Thus, a powerful national sentiment rose in India to

support and assist our brethren in other continents engaged in a common endeavour. We saw this as a duty to ourselves. Liberation of Zimbabwe and other countries of this great Continent was visualized as a reaffirmation of our own hard-won freedom. Such was the intensity and degree of identification with your struggle. The indivisibility of human freedom was the legacy bequeathed by Mahatma Gandhi to us and carried forward by Jawaharlal Nehru. Under their leadership, India was the first to raise its voice in the United Nations against racialism, against Apartheid and against the invidious continuance of colonialism in new forms. We clearly perceived and emphatically declared before the comity of nations that until the democratic will of the people of Zimbabwe found free expression, Southern Rhodesia could not be regarded as a self-governing territory. We unequivocally denounced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the minority regime as illegal and unacceptable and led the imposition of an embargo against it.

Excellency, Zimbabwe's liberation struggle generated great popular enthusiasm in India. We followed its course with sympathy and support, with implicit confidence in your eventual victory. On a personal note, I vividly recall the following words in my own speech at a mass rally of over a million people at Calcutta in December 1972. A message was expressed on behalf of the entire nation of "wholehearted solidarity to the heroic people of Zimbabwe who are valiantly struggling for their freedom against the usurper white minority regime in Salisbury."

In 1976, Indira Gandhi spoke of the unfinished revolution of our times and of the heartbeat of Africa. She declared:

"It is no distant thunder; the drums are beating.... All people who have fought for freedom or care for it, identify themselves with the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Another chapter of the unfinished revolution is about to be written."

Excellency, that chapter is now part of world's history and you played the leading role in writing it. With Zimbabwe joining the community of free nations, our two countries work together on key issues of peace, disarmament and development which are of common concern to all humankind. Our endeavours reflect the unflinching spirit of our struggle for freedom and the confidence of nations aware of their strength and achievements. Our cooperation is a powerful force in the G-15, in the Commonwealth, and in

the Non-aligned Movement. We recall the historic Harare summit when, under your leadership Excellency, the Africa Fund was established, signifying our unflinching opposition to Apartheid.

Recent years have witnessed sweeping changes in your continent, in ours, and indeed in the very nature of our contemporary world. With the abolition of Apartheid, a major source of conflict of Africa has been eliminated. The world has also transposed from the earlier conditions of the Cold War. A new global economic balance appears to be in the making as between the South and the North. The rapid march of technology holds immense promise in addressing problems of poverty, ignorance and disease that afflict the Third World. But new challenges and opportunities before us only underline the need for unity, friendship and cooperation between the nations of the South and essential interdependence between the developed and developing countries. It is vital that India and Zimbabwe, with their shared experience and common aspirations, work even closer together in this perspective, for the good of our people and the cause of human progress and happiness.

With a proud history of solidarity during the struggle for freedom, Excellency, we thus see ourselves as partners in the endeavours for national reconstruction. Our bilateral ties have steadily grown in content through the conclusion of agreements on trade, culture and economic cooperation. It has been our privilege to receive trainees from Zimbabwe in various fields through the India Technical and Economic Cooperation programme. We believe that the potential of our ties is immense and should strive to accelerate growth of bilateral relations to their fulfilment.

Excellency, we had the honour of receiving you in New Delhi in 1991 to confer the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. It was my privilege to chair the International Jury for the Award. In a handsome gesture, you donated the prize to establish the Jawaharlal Nehru-Robert Mugabe Trust, with a view to promoting exchanges of scholars between our two countries. Its role in enhancement of our cultural and educational cooperation is greatly appreciated and the Government of India will be glad to donate one million rupees to augment its activities.

Excellency, on Africa Day twenty-one years ago, Indira Gandhi spoke of the need for developing nations to help each other to "gain in strength and make their voice heard, so that the justice that

was so long denied can at last be attained, not just for ourselves, but to enable us to work together for a much better world." This is the philosophy of our fraternal relationship and the basis of our close cooperation. Let us today reaffirm our shared commitment to realize the greater goals for which our people sought freedom and liberty.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request you to join me in proposing a toast:

- to the good health and happiness of the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr. Robert Mugabe;
- to the progress, prosperity and happiness of the friendly people of Zimbabwe; and
- to the further strengthening of the fraternal ties between Zimbabwe and India.

Role of UN in Promoting World Peace

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. It was on 26 June 1945 that the Charter of the United Nations was signed by 50 countries. That family has now grown, and I understand that today there are no less than 185 member-countries of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations, the coming into being of the United Nations Organization, its growth, its role and the participation of more and more countries as its constituents, reflect the march of history over the last five decades.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said: "From the very outset we have reposed our faith in the UNO, not because we considered it a perfect organization but because we thought it was a step in the right direction, because we felt its objectives were right."

Indeed the UN Charter articulates concepts and ideals that are central to India's ancient heritage of thought and at the heart of our approach and aspirations for the future.

The goal of One world, of the equality of human beings, of world peace, of friendship and cooperation between nations and peoples, of the prosperity of humankind - these represent a deeply cherished ideal in our culture and our vision of the future.

“अयं निजः परावेति गणनां लघुचेतसाम्।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥”

This has been an essential feature of our outlook. That is why we valued the coming into being of the United Nations and have contributed our utmost to its role. Consistently we have been guided by our perception that a world institution such as the United Nations, as a forum for the world community, represents an advance by the human race towards the building of a higher human civilization.

India signed the UN Charter fifty years ago and has honoured her pledge with absolute dedication in word and deed. We have been active participants in UN peace-keeping endeavours - whether in the Korean Peninsula, Indo-China or Africa. Eradication of poverty, creation of employment, and the building of an equitable international economic order are objectives innate to the UN Charter. India's contributions in all these areas of concern have been of special value, as we have done so whilst engaged in the complex and challenging task of our own national reconstruction.

India was in the vanguard of the movement for the dismantlement of colonial structures around the globe. We championed decolonization, led the struggle against racialism and articulated the aspirations of the Third World for Peace, Disarmament and Development. We have stood unflinchingly for Democracy and human rights, and have consistently worked to strengthen global understanding, friendship and cooperation.

Today, fifty years after the United Nations came into existence, India is in a position to do even more towards securing the goals of the UN Charter.

Enormous problems confront the world today - problems of poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and ignorance, ecological degradation and waste. Juxtaposed with these are the tensions and conflicts that sadly afflict relations among nations. Unless the richer industrialized countries do more towards addressing the crucial areas of food, fair trade, technology, debt and development,

international peace and security will remain fragile and uncertain. One of the crucial challenges before the world community, which the United Nations can help face, is in giving greater importance to the economic issues of our times and heightening realization of the indivisibility of Peace, of Prosperity and of Disaster in this One World.

There are thus many moral imperatives for the United Nations, which, expressed differently translate into simple but compelling and practical considerations that have a positive bearing on the well-being of all.

Increasingly, the need of our times is to safeguard, promote and make pervasive a moral and intellectual solidarity among the nations and peoples of our planet. It is the creation of, and the strength of, such solidarity, that will be the true basis for the work and the success of all who strive to materialize the goals of the UN Charter.

India believes that the UN has a vital role to play in implementing such an agenda — a role that depends, for its success, on the spirit of cooperation among its members. It is a forum which can strengthen a sense of enlightened self-interest in the world community transcending the plane of narrow, competitive viewpoints.

Let us today, on this important occasion, reiterate our commitment to the noble principles of the UN Charter and continue steadfastly to work, with renewed vigour, in the great cause of building a better future for humankind.

Regional Cooperation — A Step towards Globalisation

I AM VERY glad to be with all of you today at the inauguration of the Regional Meeting of the Ministers of Industry of the Asia Pacific Region. I extend to all of you a cordial welcome and hope that your deliberations, which will focus on important challenges of our times, will be productive in terms of agreeing on possible solutions.

Inaugural session of the Regional Meeting of the Ministers of Industry of the Asia Pacific Region, New Delhi, 19 October 1995

Address to Parliament on the celebrations of the Anniversary of the Indian arrival in Trinidad and Tobago, 30 May 1995



At a State Banquet in Chile, 1 June 1995

At a Banquet in his honour in Namibia, 5 June 1995



At the Banquet hosted by His Excellency Dr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Harare, 7 June 1995

Inaugurating the Regional Meeting of the Ministers of Industry of the Asia Pacific Region, New Delhi, 19 October 1995



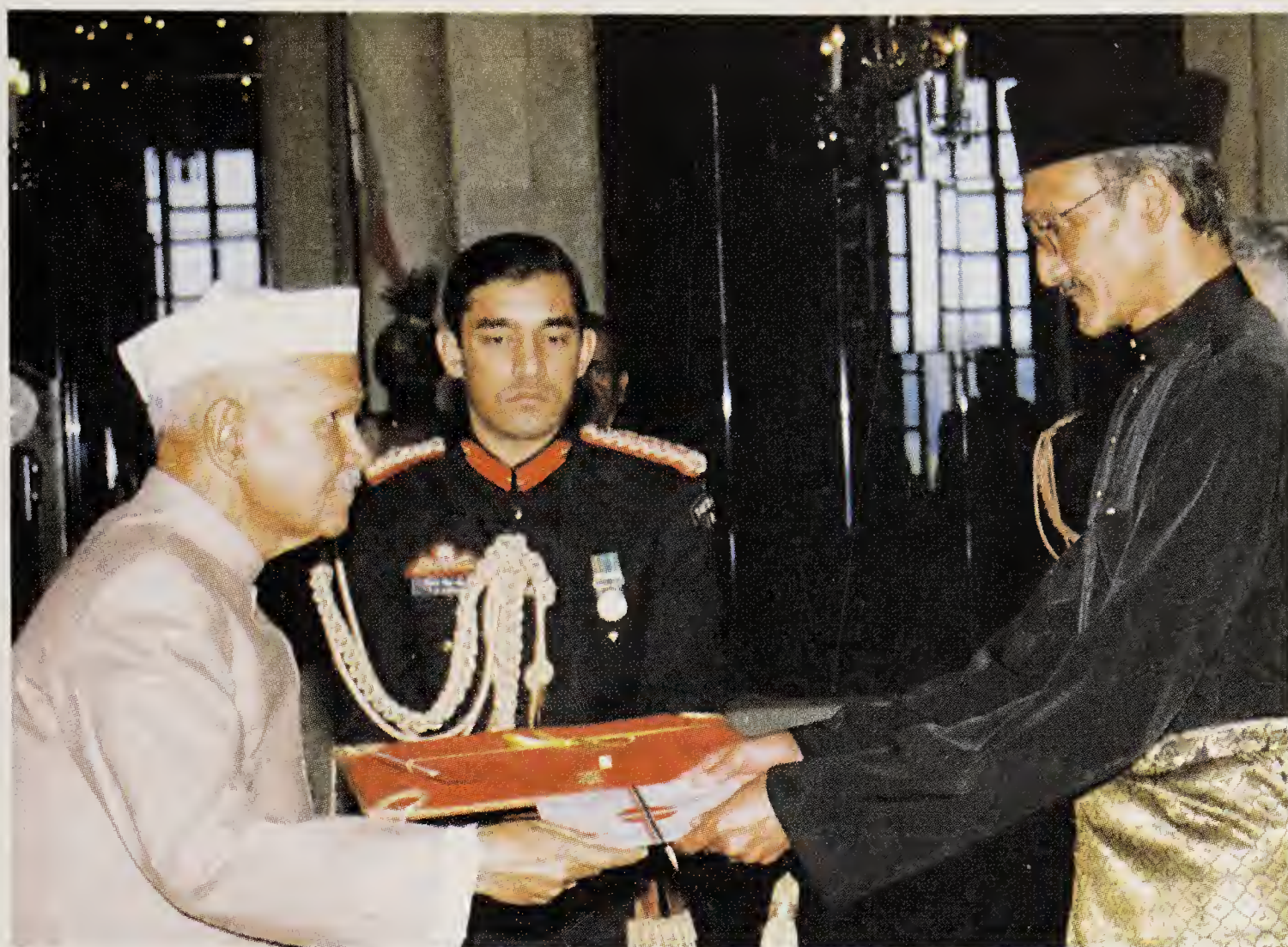
Calling on the President of Armenia, 14 December 1995

*Presenting the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development
1995 to General Olusegun Obasanjo, New Delhi, 19 November 1996*



*Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Finland, His Excellency
Mr. Marti Ahtisaari and Madame Eeva Ahtisaari, New Delhi, 25 November
1996*

*Accepting the Credentials from His Excellency Dato Marzuki Mohammed Noor,
High Commissioner-Designate of Malaysia, New Delhi, 7 December 1996*



*Accepting the Credentials from His Excellency Mr. Choi Dae Hwa, Ambassador-
Designate of the Republic of Korea, 12 December, 1996*

Accepting the Credentials from His Excellency Mr. Michael McGeever, Ambassador Designate of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Union, New Delhi, 17 December 1996



While conferring the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 1994 on His Excellency Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, New Delhi, 20 December 1996

Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma, New Delhi, 14 February 1997



President of the Republic of Philippines, Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, calls on the President, 3 March 1997

His Excellency Mr. Yassar Arafat called on the President, 7 April 1997



President of Peru called on the President, 26 May 1997

A distinguishing feature of the 20th century is the growing perception of the global nature of the issues facing humanity. We have seen this awareness in recent decades in respect of the degradation of our environment. Old epidemics and new diseases have both underlined this in the field of health. Weapons of mass destruction have demonstrated how fragile is our common existence, and why it is no longer possible for any nation to isolate itself from others. Globalization has been accelerated by a variety of factors, and revolutionary advances in technology are undeniably the most important of them. The spread of information technology has brought diverse societies together in a way altogether inconceivable just a few years ago. Vast improvements in the mode of travel too have made their contribution. The onset of the age of satellites has driven home the message of common solutions to shared problems.

Men of vision, who envisaged the world beyond immediate terms and without the constraints of a narrow outlook have advocated the need for a different kind of approach to the world's problems. Two World Wars and the ravages of the anti-colonial struggle strengthened the conviction that the time for narrow nationalism was past.

In India, this belief found a powerful voice in Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister, whose words at the very moment of our Independence are as relevant now as they were then:

“All the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

The commitment to common striving for shared goals is symbolised, above all, by the United Nations. The UN and its various agencies provided fora where serious problems confronting humankind could be addressed with the attention and resources which they deserved. Unfortunately, the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility generated by the Cold War dissipated the will to work together. Today this opportunity for joint endeavours has presented itself once again. We must not repeat the mistake of letting it slip.

The global approach is particularly important to economic thinking. Our experience has demonstrated that the quest for

prosperity cannot be pursued in exclusion. Economies of the world are so interlinked by trade, services, investments, human resources and technology that developments in one corner inevitably have their impact on another. Improving living standards, enhancing incomes and increasing jobs are aspirations common to all. To this end, we all have limited resources which need to be utilised efficiently. Deriving full advantage from our complementarities and exchanging experiences to mutual benefits have, therefore, become increasingly essential.

The growth of regional cooperation has been the practical manifestation in different parts of the world of the desire to work together for common benefit. With commonalities in economic, political, social and cultural terms, regions are perceived as a natural framework. A trend visible in all continents, it accounts for the European Union, the ASEAN and SAARC in Asia, NAFTA and MERCOSUR in the Americas, the SADC in Africa, the APEC and so on. Some of these organizations have done better than others, the difference being in the willingness of individual States to set aside petty aims and objectives. The potential for joint endeavours in the Asia Pacific Region, in particular, is notable and this gathering is, therefore, that much more important.

Successful regional groupings have naturally expanded their membership. They have also sought to draw other nations into sustained dialogue and partnership. Relationships between regional organizations have also come into being. These are all positive trends, underlining the message that regional cooperation is but an interim step towards a global one. If such groupings are to remain true to their spirit, they must continue to be outward looking and not fall prey to the temptation of that very narrow thinking which bedevilled nations in the past.

Regional and trans-regional endeavours are gathering strength today because there is a growing consensus on macro-economic issues and strategies. We are all agreed on reducing barriers to freer trade and greater flow of investments. The importance of improving human skills through education and training is widely appreciated. So too is the need for labour mobility to promote optimal use of human resources. Advancing transportation and telecommunications, harnessing science and technology and conserving the environment are all increasingly envisaged in a global setting. International tourism and mass media have helped

surmount cultural barriers. Even in that most difficult of arenas, the political one, we are witnessing joint efforts at combating common foes, such as terrorism, international crime and illegal narcotics trade. All these developments have helped change our attitudes and approaches. Growth in one region is seen as benefiting others by expanding markets, thus emphasizing the concept of interdependence. Technology is visualised today as creating jobs rather than threatening them. And we regard prosperity as an exercise in mutual advancement, rather than as a zero-sum game.

New opportunities for regional and global cooperation emerged at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. With the establishment of the World Trade Organization, an open, viable and rule-based multilateral trading system promised to come into being. If all the major trading nations and regional groupings adhere to the spirit with which it was created, our ability to confront common challenges will vastly improve. We, in India, have both unilaterally and in the context of multilateral trade negotiations, undertaken significant changes in our regimes of trade, investment and services. But the picture, as we look around us, is not altogether promising. The world trade scene is witnessing unilateral interpretations and pressures, backtracking on commitments and new demands, extraction of concessions outside the agreed framework, and usage of extraneous considerations to deny comparative advantages. Some of the very voices urging the opening of our economy have become protectionist in regard to their own. Those who stress the importance of financial services and intellectual property rights fail to recognize that mobility of human resources is equally important for others. It is only through the process of give and take, and by a balance of obligations and responsibilities, that we can realize the objective of global growth.

Charting the path of economic progress requires a long-term approach. It needs patience, diplomacy, self-restraint and looking beyond immediate advantage. Above all, it requires a commitment to a vision, a vision which is expressed in this ancient Indian saying:

“अयं निजः परावेति गणनां लघुचेतसाम्
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥”

(“This is mine, that is his’: counting thus is the outlook of lesser minds. The virtuous and the wise recognize all humankind as one family.)

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Regional Meeting of Industry Ministers of the Asia Pacific Region. I hope that your deliberations would be most productive.

Myanmar Echoes Nehru’s Voice of Freedom

I AM GLAD to be with all of you today to confer the 1993 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding on a fellow Asian from Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The world has acknowledged Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru as a shining symbol of freedom and humanity. One of the great leaders of India’s monumental struggle for Independence, he visualized in the attainment of freedom the realization of truth. Pandit Nehru devoted his entire life to this quest for liberty. No sacrifice was too great and no reward adequate to swerve him from his chosen path. The mass movement which he led determined the course of modern history by bringing to an end the era of colonialism. With India’s freedom came that of Asia, soon to be followed by that of our sister continent of Africa. The world was never the same again.

Freedom, for Pandit Nehru had an ethical context and a moral purpose. It was not an end objective in itself but a climate in which human talents and creativity could be unleashed for the greater benefit of humankind. For those nations which had been impoverished by years of bondage and servitude, freedom had a special meaning as a condition in which society could be rebuilt.

“Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour?” Panditji asked, the day India achieved its Independence. In his reply, he spelt out its purpose thus:

Conferring the 1993 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding on Madame Aung San Suu Kyi, New Delhi, 14 November 1995

“To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.” This vision of freedom articulates the yearning of the masses, not only in India but in other countries as well. It was natural that the first half of a life spent in struggling for freedom should be followed by a second in single-minded devotion to preserving and enlarging that very freedom. Panditji’s contribution to the rebuilding of our nation after Independence needs no testimony. His ideas and activities touched upon so many facets of our existence that he is rightly regarded as the architect of modern India. It was his vision which was the basis for our industrial development and agricultural growth. He was the moving force behind our educational and scientific institutions. It was his interest which led to a revival of our ancient cultural and intellectual heritage. But indisputably, Panditji’s greatest contribution was in establishing respect for the rule of law and building Parliamentary Democracy. Time has shown that these have been truly enduring legacies which have stood the people well.

Panditji envisaged democracy as more than a political, economic or social concept. To him, it reflected a bent of mind, an outlook, indeed an approach to life. He defined its relationship to freedom thus: “It involves the freedom of the individual to grow and to make the best of his capacities and ability. It involves a certain tolerance of others and even of others’ opinion when they differ from yours.” The wherewithal of democracy has been developed in India over the ages past. Similarly, respect for the rule of law has been a primary feature of our ethos. But it was Panditji who synthesized our various traditions and practices to fashion Parliamentary Democracy as a modern political system.

Democracy is not a mere exercise in elections, though the electoral process has a vital place in it. It is born out of a shared appreciation of both the rights and duties of individuals and of the State. Democracy has a powerful ethical meaning, in that it is a firm rejection of violence, coercion and compulsion as a means to achieve political objectives. Therefore, Panditji had this to say in its favour: “It is the right means to achieve ends and because it is a peaceful method. Secondly, because it removes the pressures which other forms of Government may impose on the individual.

It transforms the discipline which is imposed by authority into self-discipline.”

The essence of democracy is a willingness to give and take, to accept honest differences and to meet the just demands of the people. When this is done in letter and spirit, from the multiplicity of voices emerges a national consensus acceptable to all. When people realize that this is in their interest, they do not require an external force to discipline them. Supporting democracy elsewhere is part of affirming one's own democratic credentials.

An appreciation of diversity and its enriching qualities is fundamental to every democratic system. After all, multiplicity of opinions only contribute to the wisdom and right judgement. Pluralism, whether it is political, cultural, religious or linguistic, reflects a society's encouragement of differences and variations. The ancient land of India is noted for an ethos which not merely tolerates but accepts diversity. The resulting synthesis and harmony has produced a culture unsurpassed in its richness.

Panditji was acutely aware of the need to live up to this pluralistic heritage if India was to become what destiny intended it to be. “All of us, to whatever religion we may belong”, he declared, “are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action.” It was this vision of religions, languages and ethnicities living together in harmony which was the basis for his call to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell. The wisdom of these words we can see in those societies built on narrow thinking and intolerance which have fallen prey to further sectarianism and fratricide.

Freedom is a value which cannot be circumscribed by time or space. Neither is it limited by cultural or social attributes of a society. Universal in nature, no nation or people who value their own freedom can deny it to others. Nor indeed, can they look away when freedom stands violated. “We believe that peace and freedom are indivisible”, stated Pandit Nehru, “and the denial of freedom anywhere must endanger freedom elsewhere.” These words are not simply an exhortation or even a belief, but a reminder to all of us, and particularly to those of us who enjoy freedom and liberty.

History has demonstrated in different continents over different times that the spread of ideas cannot be halted. If at all, modern technology has brought us all still closer together and has

strengthened our common commitment to those core values which have sustained humanity over the ages. Jawaharlal Nehru was a visionary who believed in the One World. Isolation and living apart were, for him, manifestation of parochialism and narrow thinking. Each of India's achievements, he saw as a contribution to the common good of humankind. During our 'tryst with destiny' he spoke of working to give reality to our dreams.

"Those dreams are for India", he said, "but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart."

India and Myanmar are two nations linked over the ages by their history and geography. The message of Lord Buddha is a powerful bond which has brought our peoples closer together. In Panditji's words: "That message of 2500 years ago is a living message today, enshrined in our hearts, and we draw experience and inspiration from it to face the struggles and difficulties that threaten to overwhelm us." As he strove to build cooperation and friendship among the people of Asia, and in the world, Panditji found a partner in Aung San, whom he described as a friend and comrade, as the architect of Burmese freedom and the acknowledged leader of her people. It is Aung San's own daughter who has shown a commitment to peace, non-violence and truth and whom we honour today.

As friends and neighbours, we wish the people of Myanmar well. Let us strive for the cause of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between all nations and peoples — a cause which was upheld throughout his life by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

Dr. Nyerere — International Statesman and World Citizen

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to associate myself with the presentation of the First Gandhi Peace Prize to Dr. Julius Nyerere

of Tanzania. This Award instituted in memory of the Father of Our Nation during his 125th Birth Anniversary celebrations, reflects India's deep and abiding commitment to the principles of peace and non-violence which Mahatma Gandhi stood for.

Bapu's entire life was dedicated to the service of humanity. It was a struggle for social and political transformation of society based on a deep spiritual awareness and knowledge that Truth alone triumphs; that truth and non-violence are inseparable and there is no peace where there is untruth. From this philosophy emerged his conviction that right means were essential to secure cherished goals and if the means themselves are wrong, ends too get stained and sullied.

Writing in *Young India* of 15 December, 1927, Bapu said: "My experience, daily growing stronger and richer, tells me that there is no peace for individuals or for nations without practising Truth and Non-violence to the uttermost extent possible for man. The policy of retaliation has never succeeded."

On non-violence, Bapu said: "I swear by non-violence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of mankind... I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary, the evil it does is permanent."

It is in South Africa where Gandhiji spent several years as a young lawyer, that he experimented with his philosophy of Satyagraha or Truth Force and civil disobedience against unjust laws. The experience gained in South Africa, of non-violent opposition and the use of Satyagraha to fight injustice, discrimination and indignity, became the determining, indeed sacred principle of our own freedom struggle. His encounter with racial discrimination in South Africa exerted a strong moral influence on the Government of India, which launched its campaign against racial discrimination, as early as 1946, in the United Nations.

It is fitting that the first Gandhi Peace Prize should go to the great son of Africa, Dr. Julius Nyerere. An ardent advocate for peaceful change, Dr. Nyerere waged an unrelenting non-violent struggle for the freedom and independence of his country. On 27 May 1958, he wrote: "Colonialism is an intolerable humiliation to us. We shall use no violence. We shall stoop to no dishonest methods. We shall be as clean in our methods as we are in our aims. We shall publicly declare our methods as we publicly declare

our aims. We shall not submit to humiliation." This is indeed the philosophy of Bapu.

Dr. Nyerere is a visionary thinker with pan-African ideals, an international statesman and a world citizen. He has made a sterling contribution in the successful struggle against apartheid. Nyerere was the guiding force and inspiration behind the Organisation of African Unity.

As President of Tanzania, his was the voice of resurgent Africa, as it emerged from years of bondage and suffering under colonial domination. His clarion call 'Uhuru Umoja Ujamaa' (Freedom, Unity and Social Justice), struck a responsive chord in the hearts of people throughout Africa. Along with leaders such as Nehru, Nkrumah and Nasser he articulated, particularly through the forum of the Non-Aligned Movement, the aspirations of the newly independent countries to be full and equal members of the comity of nations.

His striving for peace and harmony, equality, human dignity and development of the human potential, at the national level, was equally evident in his efforts in the international arena. Together with Smt. Indira Gandhi, he championed the cause of nuclear disarmament in the six-nation, five-continent initiative.

Smt. Gandhi, I recall, had referred to Dr. Nyerere as "a man of vision, a man of action, a man of compassion, who would like to light a candle on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro to bring hope and faith to those in despair."

As Chairman of the South Commission, he provided a fresh perspective to the problems of developing economies and worked for their equal participation in an increasingly interdependent world.

Mwalimu, as Dr. Nyerere is referred to, is a teacher, an Acharya, who teaches by example. We in India, have a great respect for knowledge and wisdom, and reverence for our teachers. As it is said in the *Rig Veda*:

“अहमेव स्वयम् इदं वदामि
जुष्टं देवेभिर् उत मानुषेभिः ।
यं कामये तं तम् उग्रं कृणोमि
तं ब्रह्माणं तम् ऋषि तं सुमेधाम् ॥”

(I, verily, myself say this which is welcome to the Enlightened Ones and to men; Him whom I love I make mighty: I make him a wise man, a seer, a man of talent.)

Gandhiji too had once said : “Knowledge . . . is intended for one’s salvation, that is to say, service of mankind.” In Mwalimu, we find a *karmayogi* who has lived up to these precepts. His is the wisdom acquired over long years of toil and effort in the cause of humanity and from his deep learning and spirituality.

His lifelong contribution to the promotion of international understanding was recognized by India in 1973 when the Jawaharlal Nehru Award was conferred upon him. Today, we felicitate him again for his devoted and selfless efforts for peace, social justice and equality and for his work for the improvement in the quality of life of all people, particularly the less-privileged and the downtrodden.

It has been rightly said of Dr. Nyerere that his unique personality is a rare combination of two qualities—the moral fervour of Mahatma Gandhi and the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru.

In honouring him today, we honour the ideals and principles which Gandhiji stood for; we carry forward the great message of Bapu to the world.

On this happy occasion I wish Mwalimu many more years of fruitful service in the cause of humanity.

India and Korea : A Common Cultural Heritage

IT IS A great pleasure to welcome the first President to visit India from the Republic of Korea, the Land of the Morning Calm. It is indeed noteworthy that this visit has been undertaken by the first democratically elected civilian President of the Republic of Korea. On behalf of the Government, and people of India and on my own behalf, I extend to you and to your delegation a very warm welcome.

Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Kim Young Sam and Madame Kim, New Delhi, 24 February 1996

Excellency, I would like to welcome also the representatives of the Korean industry as part of your delegation. I am sure Indian captains of industry and business would build bonds of friendship and cooperation which will strengthen and enhance the regular exchanges between our respective business communities. Closer interaction between our two economies, drawing upon our respective complementarities, would be mutually beneficial and help in building a better world.

India and Korea are ancient civilizations. Our people have known each other well from very early times. Buddhism, which is an integral part of Indian philosophical thought, came to Korea in the early years of the first millennium. Buddhism forms an enduring common link between our two countries with monks and scholars regularly travelling from one to the other. The famous Korean Monk Haejo, had undertaken an amazing ten-year voyage to India in the eighth century and left behind an invaluable record of socio-economic conditions in the India of that time.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, in a poem about Korea in 1929 on the tenth anniversary of the First March Movement, wrote :

“In the golden age of Asia
Korea was one of the lamp-bearers
That lamp needs to be lit again
For the illumination of the East”

These were prophetic words indeed. The Republic of Korea has undergone a remarkable democratic transformation and taken its rightful and respected position in the international comity of nations.

The achievements of the Republic of Korea have correctly been described as the Miracle of East Asia. In a span of one generation — between 1960 and today — Korean per capita income has risen from barely US \$ 60 to US \$ 10,000. In 1995, your exports crossed the US \$ 100 billion mark exhibiting a thousand-fold increase from the level of US \$ 100 million in 1964.

We have noted with interest the dynamic foreign policy followed by the Republic of Korea based on the principles of globalization (SEGYEHWA) enunciated by Your Excellency. The Republic of Korea is engaged in strengthening its relations with

its neighbours while maintaining cordial relations with traditional friends, and working for peace and stability in North East Asia.

You are also striving for the peaceful reunification of Korea. India is convinced that the realization of this objective will contribute to peace and stability in your region and in the Asian continent.

India was privileged to play a humanitarian role at the end of the Korean war as Chairman of the Neutral Nations' Repatriation Commission. India also contributed a medical team to heal the wounds of that unfortunate conflict.

We are committed to peace, economic and social development. India's considerable manufacturing base, buoyant private sector, pool of highly trained technical and management personnel comprising the second largest in the world, sustained growth in agriculture with a reserve stock of 37 million tonnes of foodgrains, a well-established legal system and the institutional infrastructure of an advanced polity, provide the foundation for rapid growth.

It is increasingly being said that the 21st century will be the century of Asia. This is in recognition of the historic changes taking place in this Continent of ours. The Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947, was the precursor of the Look East policy that India has pursued in sharper focus in recent years. Our relations with fellow-Asian countries, near and far, have grown. The process of regional cooperation in South Asia is proceeding steadily. The Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) came into effect on 7 December 1995. Countries of the region have now agreed to work for a Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by the end of the century. ASEAN, our closest neighbouring region of South East Asia, has accepted India as a full Dialogue Partner.

Excellency, I am convinced that your discussions and the Agreements that will be signed during your visit will contribute to the further strengthening of our ties. Stronger linkages and interaction between our two societies will bring us closer. Exchange of visits of Parliamentarians, academicians, media persons and NGO representatives are already taking place. Enhancing these linkages is important not only for our bilateral cooperation but also for further strengthening our roles in the comity of nations.

Our shared democratic values, common cultural heritage, and our market-oriented economic policies, provide a solid base for closer ties. Let us together seize the vast opportunities for intensifying these relations, which now beckon us.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like all of you to join me in a toast :

- to the good health of His Excellency President Kim Young Sam and Madame Kim;
- to the well-being and prosperity of the people of the Republic of Korea; and
- to ever-increasing friendship, goodwill and cooperation between the peoples of India and the Republic of Korea.

Indians Overseas Are Ambassadors of Culture

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be amidst fellow Indians here in Muscat. I am touched by the affection of the Indian community and particularly the school children who have gathered to welcome me.

India and Oman have a rich and ancient past. We are friendly neighbours across the sea who share a vibrant legacy of trade, partnership, kinship and friendship. The navigators of this great sea-faring nation were instrumental in the “discovery” of the sea-route to India from the West. Oman had close links with Tipu Sultan’s kingdom in the eighteenth century. Omani and Indian merchants have engaged in fruitful and mutually beneficial commerce over the ages.

The people of this land are famed for their warmth and hospitality. I have experienced this myself in abundant measure during this visit. Over 130 years ago, William Gifford Palgrave, a traveller to this great country had described this pleasing trait of the people thus : “In politeness of manner and general civilization, in elegance of furniture and trades, the townsmen of Muscat much

surpassed those of any other Arab seaport . . . , nor is the peculiar Arab frankness and cordial hospitality wanting". This is a quotation from a rare manuscript entitled "Narrative of A Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia", 1862-63, which is preserved in a very famous library in Bihar — the Khuda Baksh Library.

Muscat, the capital of this friendly country, has been a bustling port for centuries, a meeting ground for people of diverse cultural traditions and an entrepot for trade and commerce. I am glad to observe that this cosmopolitan ethos has taken deep roots and has flourished in this hospitable country. This is evident from the large community of expatriates, of which the Indians form an integral part.

The Indian community here, as in other countries, represents a very precious and valuable link in India's bilateral relations with friendly countries. The people of Oman learn about our culture and civilization through the resident Indian community. They form an image about our country and our people on the basis of their interaction with the expatriate community, which is a bridge of friendship between the Indian and the Omani people. In order to fulfil this important responsibility, I believe, it is vital for our community to have the trust and affection of the Omani people. Respect for the tradition, culture and religion of the host country, observance in letter and in spirit, of the laws and customs of this land are of prime importance.

It is also essential for the entire expatriate community to make their full and sincere contribution to the development, progress and prosperity of Oman, by participating effectively and actively in the programmes and policies which have been set in train by the Government of Oman. Our people have joined hands and are working in partnership with the people of Oman in their quest for a better and more meaningful life. Both Oman and India have high expectations which I am sure you will all live up to.

I am very pleased to learn that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos appreciates the contributions of the Indian community to the development of Oman and that Indians are law-abiding, hard working and are known for their integrity. It is essential to retain this trust and build upon it. In this way non-resident Indians will contribute in significant measure to ever closer and more cordial ties between India and Oman.

Though you are expatriates and live abroad, there is an important responsibility towards India which devolves upon the NRI community. It is important for you to remain in close contact with the momentous developments in India; and with our glorious pluralistic culture and traditions and languages. The Indian diaspora is an invaluable link between India and outside world and should become a catalyst for the transmittal to India of new and positive influences, ideas, skills, knowledge and resources.

In recent years, dynamic impulses for growth have been generated in our economy with the dismantling of outmoded controls and regulations. There is, today, much greater emphasis on private initiative and enterprise and immense opportunities have opened up for participation by non-resident Indians in the economic processes in India. These new avenues for interaction should be availed of in order to maintain and strengthen, in a very tangible manner, your bonds with the motherland.

The Indian community abroad represents the vibrant diversity and pluralism and the deep-rooted unity and oneness of India. They are the real ambassadors of our great nation. They do not represent only a specific State or region of India but the whole country. Whatever the State that an Indian belongs to, whether it is Gujarat or Kerala or any other, it is important always to remember that the culture of his or her State, like the culture of every other State in India has a universal outlook — an outlook which emphasizes the values of pluralism, harmony and oneness; peace and non-violence; tolerance and brotherhood. These values give us our strength; they have sustained India through the vicissitudes of history. And, our eclectic approach of appreciating, accepting and assimilating the best from every culture, is a source of great strength to Indians specially when they are away from Indian shores. It is these values which contribute to our internationalist outlook where every Indian can see himself or herself as a citizen of the world and as a member of the global family 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' — the world is my family — is the message of our tradition which all Indians and particularly, the Indian diaspora, should always remember. This concept is linked to another vitally important ideal — that of service and caring for others. I am reminded of some lines of Narsi Mehta which Bapu was very fond of and which convey the message of our ethos of service to all humanity:

“वैष्णव जन तो तेणे कहिए, जे पीड़ पराई जाणे रे।
पर दुखे उपकार करे तोये मन अभिमान न आणे रे।”

(Consider him to be the true devotee who identifies with those who suffer and bears no vanity in serving them).

The same philosophy is expressed in this verse from the *Atmopadesa Satakam* by Sree Narayana Guru :

“अवन अवन आत्मसुखतिन आचरिक्कुन्नवा
अपरंटे सुखतिनाइ वरेण।”

(Whatever one does in pursuit of one's own pleasure should be for the happiness of others.)

Let us all draw inspiration from this message of selfless service and work together for the well-being of all humanity.

The Indian School in Muscat is playing a very valuable role not merely in educating students and moulding their character and personalities but in inculcating these values and ideals of our tradition. I congratulate the School for its important role as a crucial link between the culture and heritage of India and our expatriate community, and between India and Oman.

I thank you for inviting me to this function and for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

India and Poland — A Bonding of Human Values

I THANK YOU for your gracious words of welcome and for the kind sentiments of goodwill which you have expressed towards my country. My wife and I, and the members of my delegation, are deeply touched by the spontaneous friendship and warmth with which we have been received in Poland.

It is a special pleasure to visit your historic city. Warsaw symbolizes the courage and fortitude of the Polish people in their

valiant struggle against Nazi aggression during the Second World War. The unbending spirit of your people reached out to us across the oceans, even as we were engaged in our own struggle for freedom. Our leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, had condemned the Nazi aggression against Poland. The holocaust of the Jewish people in Auschwitz, Birkenau and other places created horror in India. How true are these words of His Holiness, the Pope : "Auschwitz does not cease to admonish, reminding us that ... all racial hatred inevitably leads to the trampling of human dignity." Through those traumatic years there was close interaction between the leaders of our two countries as is reflected by the correspondence between the former Prime Minister of Poland and celebrated pianist, Mr. Paderewski, and Mahatma Gandhi. In a cable in 1939, Paderewski said :

"On behalf of a nation which is today defending the sacred right to remain free against a cruel and nameless tyranny, I appeal to you as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world to use your noble influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship".

Mahatma Gandhi responded:

"My whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are engaged for the sake of saving their freedom.. (I) send to the brave Poles... my heart-felt prayer for the early termination of their fearful trial and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For God is always the upholder of Justice."

Such was the spiritual bonding between the two leaders in the face of great adversity. Another poignant episode of this period relates to the several thousand Polish women and children who found refuge and solace in Jamnagar and Kolhapur in India, during the Second World War.

I have recounted these instances because they symbolize the warmth, friendship and brotherhood which we Indians have always felt for the Polish people and which you have reciprocated in full and abundant measure.

Our bonds of friendship date back to the middle ages. In the fifteenth century, a citizen of your country from Poznan worked for

the Ruler of Bijapur, and there are records of writers, soldiers and missionaries from Poland having visited India from time to time. Poland has a well-established tradition of Indological studies from the early nineteenth century, when Majewski authored a translation of the *Ramayana* and the eminent historian, Lelewel, published his *History of Ancient India*.

During the present century, several Polish travellers made their way to India. Wanda Dynowska who adopted the Indian name of Uma Devi, established the Polish-Indian library and initiated a series of translations of Indian literary and philosophical texts. Norblin's precious legacy of beautiful paintings at Umaid Bhavan Palace in Jodhpur, continues to charm visitors to this day. Rabindranath Tagore, one of the towering personalities to this century, established the Indo-Polish Friendship Association in India. It was headed by illustrious men like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who later became the President of India. Our historical association has provided a solid foundation for strengthening our interaction in modern times.

Mr. President, the momentous developments in Poland over the last two decades have contributed to fundamentally reshaping international relations. During the last few years, Poland has effected a successful transformation of both its political and economic systems. Your country is today a forward-looking democracy with a market-oriented economy which is well on its way towards regional and global integration. We in India, too, are proud of our open and democratic society, and are engaged in restructuring our mixed economy. It is thus natural that the changes which have taken place in Poland have not only reinforced the bonds of friendship between our two countries but have opened up new opportunities for mutually beneficial interaction.

It is a matter of satisfaction that, in recent times, our bilateral relations have grown substantially, in a myriad ways. We had the privilege of hosting your former President in India. Several exchanges of high-level visits have contributed to our mutual understanding and cooperation. Contacts between our two Parliaments and judicial systems have provided a significant and added dimension to our relations. The presence of several distinguished Parliamentarians in my delegation testifies to the importance we attach to such links. Our trade and economic linkages have increased satisfactorily and are poised for substantial growth.

Mr. President, Poland's rapid transition to a market economy and resumption of a high economic growth path are impressive achievements. We in India have also implemented a policy of economic reform and restructuring with an increased role of the private sector in economic growth and development. The changes taking place in both our countries have given rise to a number of opportunities for deepening and further enhancing our cooperation in diverse spheres. I am sure that the business delegation accompanying me will forge fruitful links with Polish companies. New partnerships and joint ventures between our two countries would add an invaluable dimension and further develop our multifaceted cooperation to our mutual benefit.

Excellency, forty-nine years ago, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister had said :

“Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

This is perhaps more true today than ever before. We live in an increasingly interdependent world. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that different interests and viewpoints are reconciled and harmonized in a just and peaceful manner. All countries should be provided the opportunity for a full, equal and effective participation in the global economy.

As the present century draws to a close and we step into a new millennium, it is necessary to create an international environment which is conducive to growth and development, prosperity and well-being for all the people of the world. Peace and non-violence are essential prerequisites for stability and progress. These are the profound values of our tradition in India and in Poland. Let us work together and enhance our partnership and cooperation not only for mutual benefit but also in the interest of international peace and prosperity.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to join me in a toast :

- to the health of His Excellency, President Kwasniewski and Madame Kwasniewska;
- to the friendship between the people of India and the people of the Republic of Poland; and
- to ever growing cooperation between our two countries.

India and Slovakia Bound by Common Goals

IT IS INDEED a great pleasure to visit your beautiful city of Bratislava, which has now taken its appointed place as the capital of independent Slovakia. My wife and I, and the members of my delegation, are deeply touched by the warm welcome which has been so spontaneously extended to us by the people of Slovakia. I thank Your Excellency for your kind words of friendship and goodwill towards my country.

India and the Slovak Republic share a tradition of close friendship and cooperation, which predates our political association. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had visited Bratislava, along with his daughter, Indira Gandhi, in 1938. A plaque in your city square commemorates this visit. It is gratifying that India's first Prime Minister is remembered with affection in Slovakia.

India and the former Czechoslovakia had developed a close and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship. There was mutual appreciation and understanding of each other's national interests and concerns and active interaction in the spheres of trade, economy, defence and technology and culture.

It is a matter of satisfaction that relations between India and Slovakia continue to be infused with the same spirit and tradition of friendship and cooperation. We have had the privilege of hosting the visit of your former Prime Minister Mr. Josef Moravcik to India as well as visits by other senior dignitaries from Slovakia. Political consultations on a wide range of issues of bilateral, regional and international interest have become a regular feature of our interaction. The Indo-Slovak Joint Committee has been re-activated and institutional linkages have been established between the chambers of commerce and industry in the two countries. Defence cooperation has become an important element of our bilateral relations. We are thus well on our way towards building a dynamic and multi-faceted bilateral relationship.

In recent years, economic and commercial relations have acquired increasing significance and have become an important

determinant of relations between nations. India and Slovakia have a long history of working together in this area. The processes of economic reform and restructuring underway in both countries have increased the potential for further strengthening and enhancing our economic and commercial relations. Together, we should take advantage of the emerging opportunities for mutual benefit and the good of all.

Mr. President, your great national poet, P.O. Hviezdoslav has said :

“Return, beloved Peace, oh, soon return;
come with the olive branch and tarry here,
and be our health, our sustenance and cheer,
a thing to god us on, a thing to earn !”

We in India have greatly admired the peaceful and non-violent manner in which the Slovak Republic emerged as an independent country. The values of peace and non-violence empowered our struggle for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. They empower our quest for prosperity and progress today. Your decisive choices in favour of democracy, political pluralism and transition to a market-oriented economy are evocative of our own ethos and tradition. The common bonds and similarities of outlook, and an abiding commitment to shared values and beliefs provide a solid foundation upon which we can build our relations in the years ahead.

Excellency, as we prepare to step into the next century, a new international order is in the process of evolution. The challenge before us is to ensure that it gives adequate representation and due weightage to the interests of all nations and harmonizes divergent view points in a manner which will ensure international peace and stability as well as prosperity and development for people all over the world. If it is to endure, the new international order should be democratic, transparent and equitable and must be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. These are goals which our two countries share. We look forward to working closely with the Slovak Republic in our collective quest for a just, peaceful and prosperous world.

Excellency, we greatly value our relations with your country, which we regard as a trusted friend of long-standing and as a reliable partner with which we would like to develop and enhance

our relationship in every sphere. I am confident that we will work together and take our friendship and cooperation from strength to strength.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to join me in a toast—

- to the health and well-being of His Excellency President Kovac and Madame Kovacova;
- to the development of multi-faceted cooperation between India and Slovakia; and
- to the abiding friendship between the people of India and the Slovak Republic.

Prague : Centre of a Rich Tradition

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be amidst the people of this glorious city. Your town hall epitomizes the spirit of this ancient and historic capital, steeped in timeless beauty and charm. The Golden Key of Prague which is being presented to me is a signal honour which I shall always cherish. It is a symbol of the friendship and understanding between our two countries and peoples.

Prague, standing as it does, at the cross roads of Europe, has over the centuries interacted with diverse cultures and traditions, assimilated and synthesized them and, thereafter, fashioned them into its own unique and wonderful ethos. Your people have experienced times of great joy and happiness and have suffered terrible tribulations and trials of cruel oppression and foreign occupation. Throughout these vicissitudes of life you have always retained your sense of pride in your city and have ever striven to make Prague an outstanding centre of arts, education, science, architecture, music and letters. This rich and vibrant tradition lives on.

The great martyr and humanist, Jan Hus lived and taught here in Prague. His intellectual integrity, his compassion and selfless service for humanity, is a source of inspiration to all. Even as he was consumed by the flames into which he was cast, he refused to recant, preferring instead to seal with his blood his commitment to these great human ideals.

Prague has the distinction of having nurtured some of the great minds of human civilization. It is here that the renowned astronomers, Tycho Brahe and Johanne Kepler propounded their seminal theories. Albert Einstein, a towering intellect of our times, taught in your city. Prague is home to some of the most celebrated institutions of classical music—the Prague Symphony and the Prague Philharmonica. The cathedrals, chapels and synagogues of this city are among the oldest and most beautiful in Europe. Their splendour is, indeed, awe-inspiring. This city of a hundred spires is a vivid symbol of the glorious heritage of your country and its rich cultural and artistic traditions.

Prague's unique legacy of culture, refinement and elegance is well known. So too is its great natural beauty and charm. It so enchanted Jawaharlal Nehru, who first visited Prague in 1938, that he wrote lyrically:

“The beautiful city of Prague has a peaceful old-world look as it stretches on either side of the winding river. It grows lovelier still as the evening shadows fall and thousands of lights glimmer on the sloping hillsides”.

But his visit had a deeper significance. Indira Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, explained it thus during her visit to Prague as Prime Minister of India in 1972.

“I had the privilege of accompanying my father to Czechoslovakia in 1938. The visit was a milestone in his lifelong battle against tyranny and injustice. And for me it was an experience which did much to mould my thinking and left a lasting impact. The tribulations of the people of Czechoslovakia in the thirties, at a time when we ourselves were fighting imperialism, stirred us deeply. My father had deep admiration for the great fortitude of the people of Czechoslovakia, which I share.”

On behalf of all the people of my country, I wish to convey to you, Mr. Lord Mayor, Honourable Mayors, the Deputy Mayors, the

Councillors and the people of the City of Prague my most cordial greetings and good wishes. I will always cherish the memories of your very friendly welcome and of the exquisite beauty of your city.

I wish you, Mr. Lord Mayor and your colleagues on the Municipal Council, good health, happiness and success in your work for the friendly people of this lively and joyful city.

Karlovy Vary—A Bohemian Centre of Arts and Culture

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to be in Karlovy Vary, this jewel of a city, nestling in the beautiful highlands of Bohemia. On behalf of my wife and myself as well as my entire delegation, I would like to thank you Lord Mayor for your gracious words of welcome and for the many kindnesses shown to us. We deeply appreciate the friendly sentiments which you have expressed about India.

Our ties go back to the Middle Ages when historical records speak of trade between the Kingdom of Bohemia and India. In modern times, India and the Czech Republic have enjoyed a relationship of close friendship and cooperation. The tradition of Indological studies in your country goes back well over a hundred years. Many outstanding academicians, intellectuals and men of letters have contributed to our mutual understanding of each other's culture and literature, history and tradition.

During my brief sojourn here, I have been struck by the natural beauty and architectural splendour of Bohemia and specially Karlovy Vary. The gentle rolling hills, the salubrious climate, the curative properties of the waters which are known throughout the world, have made this one of the most famous spa resorts. The myriad architectural styles which are reflected here have merged and intermingled to create a harmonious diversity which is charming and immensely pleasing to the eye.

But Karlovy Vary has much more to offer. Founded by the great scholar and wise ruler, Emperor Charles IV, Karlovy Vary is heir to the proud artistic and intellectual traditions of Bohemia and of the Czech Republic. This region has a historic past and a great cultural tradition. Eminent personalities—musicians, philosophers and scientists—have enriched your heritage. Some of the greatest names in Western classical music Ludwig van Beethoven, Frederic Chopin, Johannes Brahms and Bedrich Smetana, and in literature, Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Aleksander Pushkin, to name only a few, have been associated with this region and specially Karlovy Vary.

Today, Karlovy Vary is a centre of culture and arts, a town of well-known international festivals, congresses and seminars.

For us in India, Karlovy Vary is synonymous with the famous Film Festivals which are held here. To have a film shown here is a mark of quality; to win an award is the ultimate accolade, besides being a guarantee of artistic and commercial success. Over the years, Indian film-makers too have been regular participants in the festival.

The pursuit of excellence is the hallmark of many of the high value and finely crafted articles of this region. Bohemia has set global standards for diverse products, and specially for glass and crystal. This region is known for some of the most precious porcelain in the world.

Through the many vicissitudes of history, the Czech people have always cherished their faith in liberty and human dignity and have resolutely overcome the trauma of oppression and occupation. And I am glad that the Bohemian spirit has always emerged triumphant. Indeed, the people of this region are known for their industriousness and hard work, but what is most endearing is their lively spirit and the carefree and happy approach to life.

We have been touched by the affection and care shown to us in Karlovy Vary. We appreciate the warmth and friendship shown to us which reflects the cordiality of the relations between our two countries. We shall cherish the memory of our visit to your beautiful city.

Indo-Italian Friendship Is Eternal

THANK YOU FOR your kind words of welcome. My wife and I and my entire delegation has been deeply touched by the friendship and warmth with which we have been received and for the many kindnesses shown to us.

Excellency, I bring to you and the people of Italy greetings and good wishes from the people of India. I come with a message of friendship and goodwill, partnership and cooperation for mutual benefit and for the well-being of our peoples. Our earnest desire is to build upon and strengthen the strong impetus provided to the cordial relationship between our two countries by Your Excellency's earlier visit to India.

This visit to Rome is not just a visit to the capital of Italy, a prosperous, dynamic and modern society. It is a journey to the heart of Western civilization. And I speak to you this evening not only as President of India but as the representative of another great civilization which saw Rome's rise to glory. Our two cultures have known each other and have interacted with one another in a fruitful and flourishing commerce of ideas and goods. Over two thousand years, our paths have crossed frequently, always in peace, friendship and partnership. Like this city, our friendship is eternal and will endure.

We in India have great admiration for Italy and Europe—for the peace you have achieved and consolidated and for your success in improving the quality of life of your people. We are happy that Italy is at peace and that Europe is largely at peace after the early decades of this century of strife, turmoil and tumult. Barring the tragedy of the Balkans, Italy and Europe can be proud of leading their people in harmony and prosperity into the next millennium.

India too is striving to promote peaceful progress in her society, region and, indeed, the world. India's ancient ethos is one of peace and non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi was an eloquent symbol of this heritage. He secured for us our freedom and inspired millions in other lands to strive for theirs. With a sense

of mission, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru advocated these timeless values on the international stage, values which have empowered our struggle for a world free from nuclear weapons. The challenge is formidable and the path towards our goal is strewn with obstacles, but with perseverance, dedication and collective effort, our goal—humanity's goal—can be achieved.

After Independence, India embarked on an exciting journey of democratic governance to give full meaning to the freedom which we had fought for and won in all its myriad dimensions. We have achieved success but there are still distances to be travelled. Flourishing institutions of democracy, strong and diversified industrial and agricultural sectors and a vast pool of skilled and highly technical trained manpower resources provide a solid foundation to our society.

In recent years, India has undertaken a significant programme for reform and restructuring the economy. Immense opportunities for partnership, joint ventures and cooperation have emerged. Italy is discovering anew the rich potential of our society. We welcome this. Our business community believes that in a few years Italy may well be our leading economic partner in Europe. We, too, aspire to be a major partner of Italy as we were in the past. We are confident that as our economy goes through what Galileo described as “naturally accelerated motion”, this will not remain a distant dream but become a reality in the near future.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, I recall visiting Italy fifty years ago in 1946. The Second World War had just ended and there was devastation all around. Amidst the heart-rending scenes of destruction and violence and within the ruins of the Church of Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan, I vividly recall the sense of joy and relief on seeing da Vinci's “The Last Supper” miraculously intact. By the same divine grace, Italy has recovered from the nightmare of that War, successfully overcoming the economic challenge of reconstruction and the political challenge of terrorist violence. We, too, in India encounter these challenges and are determined to overcome them. We are confident that Italy and India will continue to work together to promote the ideals of democracy, peace and tolerance and build a safe, more secure and prosperous world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now request you to join me in a toast:

- to the health and happiness of His Excellency President Scalfaro;
- to the personal well-being of Miss Marianna Scalfaro;
- to the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Italy; and
- to the strengthening of the ties between Italy and India.

India and Italy Must Strive for Global Peace

IT IS A great pleasure for me and members of my delegation to be amidst you today.

I have come to Italy, a great nation, where the concept of Europe was born two thousand years ago in the Pax Romana and resurrected in our time in the Treaty of Rome. Italy spurred the Renaissance and gave an impetus to the tradition of experimental science in Europe.

Now, Europe is embarked on a series of gigantic and sensitive undertakings—the creation of a united Europe, the consolidation of the Common Market and the promotion of its values. Asia too is resurgent and bestirring itself to realize its true potential for progress and excellence in diverse fields of human endeavour. It is important at this stage in human history for the nations and peoples of the world to stand by the values illumined by experience through war and through peace. It is essential that we realize what Pandit Nehru had said at the dawn of India's Independence in 1947:

“Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments”.

Italy and India are heirs to rich and ancient civilizations and cultures and can provide a model for cooperation, friendship and achievement as between the nations of Europe and Asia striving to build a better world for all. As vibrant democracies with a shared commitment to peace, tolerance and universal human values, we can strengthen each other and contribute to global peace and prosperity.

It is of importance, Excellency, that our political partnership be continually strengthened, and an excellent way of doing this is to have a regular exchange of visits. We look forward to your visit to India in the near future.

We should also make special efforts to develop further the links between our Parliaments and Legislatures. My delegation includes several prominent Members of Parliament and, I am sure, their meetings and discussions with their counterparts will be fruitful and productive.

India, today, is embarked upon a process of economic reform and restructuring that will over the next two decades transform our society. Our policies for de-regulation and the dismantling of controls together with a greater emphasis on private initiative and enterprise has generated dynamic impulses for growth in our economy. The presence of a vast pool of highly trained technical manpower, a diversified industrial base and well-established institutions of a market economy have made India an attractive economic partner and destination for joint ventures. Indeed, it has been described as the largest emerging democratic market in the world.

Our businessmen, Excellency, I am happy to see, have already rediscovered each other. Some of our leading industrialists have accompanied me on this visit. Several Italian companies have forged joint ventures with Indian partners. The opportunities for mutually beneficial and long-term partnerships are immense. I hope that many more Italian companies will come to India to join us in the enterprise of creating a vibrant new India.

May I now invite you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to join me in a toast to:

- the health of Prime Minister Dr. Romano Prodi; and
- friendship and cooperation between the peoples of Italy and India.

Rome: Triumph of The Human Spirit

I THANK YOU for giving me the keys to the eternal city. They are symbolic of the friendship between the peoples of two glorious civilizations of the West and of the East.

I have come from Delhi, like Rome an ancient city, with a message of friendship. That friendship has been reciprocated in abundant measure during our visit, not least by you, Mr. Mayor and your citizens.

The splendour of Rome, its great cultural and spiritual heritage, the majesty of its architecture and the *joie de vivre* of the people have always captivated mankind. Rome's contribution to Western civilization and thought are unparalleled. I had the opportunity of visiting this city fifty years ago and I am glad to experience Rome for myself once again.

Rome, this triumph of the human spirit, reminds us of what we all must always preserve, protect and defend. The first cloud over Vesuvius, Pliny the Younger wrote, looked like a pine tree, before it engulfed Pompeii. The clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki looked like mushrooms before devastating these cities. Mr. Mayor, standing, here, at the centre of a great civilization, I feel bound to appeal to your citizens to join us in a crusade for the building of a non-violent and nuclear weapons-free world : a saner, safer world.

Mr. Mayor, in conclusion, I would like to thank you again for the warmth of this reception, and to convey to you and the citizens of Rome good wishes from the people of India.

Venice — A City of Splendour

IT IS AN honour to receive, as a token of friendship, the keys to a city famous for its indomitable refusal to surrender—to the sea, to its many would-be conquerors, even to the ravages of time.

I was in Venice fifty years ago, and have, in a sense, carried the memories of this city with me ever since. I am delighted that I have been able to come back and partake of the great cultural heritage, the architectural splendour and the warm ambience of Venice.

My wife and I, and indeed my entire delegation, will carry with us indelible impressions of your captivating city, not least among which, Mr. Mayor, will be memories of the warmth and hospitality with which you and your citizens have received us.

India Is Committed to South-South Co-operation

I AM HAPPY to receive the Letter of Credence appointing you as the first Ambassador of Burkina Faso with residence in New Delhi.

I am specially pleased to welcome to India a distinguished representative of a country with which we have close and fraternal ties. India and Burkina Faso share a common commitment to the ideals of peace, democracy, economic self-reliance and social justice. We have common perceptions on several regional and global issues. In recent years, our bilateral relations have made commendable progress. I am confident that the opening of a resident Embassy of Burkina Faso in New Delhi would further strengthen these ties.

India is firmly committed to the goal of South-South cooperation. Over the last few decades, we have devised methodologies to adapt advanced scientific and engineering techniques to the socio-economic conditions and resource base of our rural society. Through the Integrated Agricultural and Rural Development Project we are undertaking in Burkina Faso, we have placed our experience and know-how at the disposal of your people so that we can together demonstrate that developing countries can march forward in a spirit of mutual cooperation and collective self-reliance.

Our two countries have agreed to cooperate in a number of other areas including railway transportation, health, small-scale industries and manpower training. India is well placed to share with Burkina Faso the fruits of almost five decades of human resource development. In an increasingly inter-dependent world in which the terms of trade and technology flows are weighed heavily against the interests of the developing countries it is all the more necessary for developing countries to share their resources and know-how for mutual benefit and to raise the quality of life of their peoples.

I wish to convey through you, Mr. Ambassador, on behalf of the people and the Government of India, and on my own behalf, greetings and good wishes to His Excellency President Blaise

Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Mr. Elsyee A. Kiemde, Ambassador-Designate of Burkina Faso, New Delhi, 8 November 1996

Compaore. President Compaore's statesmanship and visionary leadership have contributed greatly to strengthening peace and stability in the West African region.

In wishing you a successful term of office in India, I assure you the fullest cooperation of my Government in our mutual effort to strengthen the already existing friendly relations between our Governments and peoples.

Indira Gandhi— A Unique Leader

I AM GLAD to participate in the ceremony for the Presentation of the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development to an illustrious son of Africa, General Olusegun Obasanjo. Though he is unable to be present with us in person, we are fortunate to have in our midst his gracious wife, Madame Stella Obasanjo, who will, I am sure, carry back our message of admiration for a man who has striven to promote the values of humanism and democracy.

Indiraji's birth anniversary always brings back a flood of memories. I had known her and her father ever since I embarked upon a life of public service, more than five decades ago. There were so many facets to her personality which truly made her a unique leader and world statesman. I recall her graciousness and dignity, her compassion, concern and caring for people, specially the weak and those in distress and her determination to pursue the task at hand—she would not rest until it was completed. She was deeply involved in and, indeed, identified herself intimately with India's pluralistic cultural traditions. She was equally interested in drawing the best from other civilizations and cultures. She was passionately devoted to the cause of peace and prosperity not only in India but throughout the world.

There is no better way of paying tribute to her than to carry forward her noble endeavours in the service of humanity—

endeavours which were cut short so tragically. Indiraji had a very profound understanding of the concepts and goals of Peace, Disarmament and Development. To her, these goals were indissolubly linked. They could not be pursued in isolation. As Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1983, she had said:

“Development, Independence, Disarmament and Peace are closely inter-related. Can there be peace along side nuclear weapons? Without peace, ... all our dreams of development turn to ashes.”

In memorable words, she stated : “No peace today, no life tomorrow.” She believed that peace was not merely the absence of war, but “active cooperation to work for survival and progress, to keep alive the hope and provide opportunity for the unfolding of the human personality.” Indeed, freedom and independence are meaningless unless, as Indiraji said, we can liberate our people from the grip of poverty and the fear of economic insecurity. True freedom is not merely political emancipation and independence, but freedom from hunger, poverty and disease.

Indiraji had a deep awareness that the goals of peace and progress could not be pursued by countries in isolation in an increasingly interdependent world characterized by strong tendencies towards integration. Like her father, she believed profoundly in the concept of ‘One World’. She did not like the term ‘Third World’ which implied that this was some other world separated from the first two. It is out of this conviction of global interdependence that she articulated untiringly, in all international fora—the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations and the Commonwealth—the concerns of the vast majority of humanity, for a world at peace, rid of nuclear weapons; for a just world with a more equitable economic interchange. With like-minded countries, she pioneered the Five-Continent Six-Nation initiative on Nuclear Disarmament. She was one of the prominent representatives at the Cancun Summit on North-South Dialogue. For her efforts, she was loved, respected and admired not just in India but in all countries and by the peoples of the world.

In honouring General Obasanjo today, we reiterate the importance of the values of Peace and Democracy, Equality and Justice which Smt. Indira Gandhi stood for. India deeply cherishes these values. At the same time, our Government is committed to

the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country. India greatly values its relations with Nigeria. We are encouraged by the Nigerian Government's announcement of a programme of transition to an elected civilian government and look forward to its early return to the Commonwealth.

India and Nigeria have been allies in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in Africa and partners in progress. We have a profound bond with Africa; Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, "experimented with truth" in South Africa. He developed his philosophy of non-violence and Satyagraha there. India inscribed the Question of Apartheid on the agenda of the United Nations at Mahatma Gandhi's behest, as early as 1946. With Nigeria, India participated in the Eminent Persons Group of the Commonwealth of which General Obasanjo was a Co-Chairman. The work done by this Group paved the way for dialogue and the ending of apartheid in South Africa.

In the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, our two nations have articulated the yearnings of our peoples for a more equitable and just world and for greater democratization in the field of international affairs, where each country's voice should be heard and respected. Within the G-15, we have together advanced the cause of South-South cooperation.

I would like to recall here some words from a speech delivered by Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1982, which reflect the closeness and commonalities between India and Africa. She had said :

"Africa is awake, its vitality is stirring the world ... Many of the outstanding men and women of our age are from Africa and Asia. Perhaps, because it is here that freedom's battles are being fought. The torch of freedom leaves a mark of fire. Involvement in great causes leaves a mark of greatness."

We wish General Obasanjo well. We wish him many more years of fruitful service to his people and to the promotion of peace and prosperity throughout the world. He represents an idea—of democracy, tolerance, equality and human rights. Let us remember that great causes make great demands on the human spirit. Ideas are immortal; with sacrifice, they emerge triumphant.

India and Finland Share Common Aspirations

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to welcome you and the members of your delegation to India during the 50th year of our Independence. Though thousands of miles separate us, we have much in common in our history and in our aspirations as free peoples. Both Finland and India have had to struggle hard for their independence and to defend their sovereignty and their democracy against difficult odds. We share the same values of democracy—tolerance, respect for diverse opinions, equality and humanism. Your great national epic *Kalewala* which has been translated into Hindi, and our own epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* convey the universal message of service to humanity and of the victory of good over evil.

It is, therefore, perfectly natural that our relations should be so cordial, reflected in the steady exchange of high-level visits, instituted after we became independent. I am confident that your visit will lead to a much closer and mutually beneficial interaction between our two countries and peoples.

The dramatic changes in Europe over the last few years have transformed the political and economic landscape of your region. We hope these developments will usher in an era of partnership and cooperation, not only within Europe, but with other regions and countries as well. We are confident that Finland, as a member of the European Union would ensure that an integrated Europe enhances its interaction with a resurgent Asia. The European Union is India's leading economic partner, and we have a natural interest in seeing it remain open and outward-looking. We hope that Finland, as a country with strong international interests, will work towards this objective.

In our region as well, important developments are taking place. SAARC has recently made operational its preferential trading arrangements. This is a step towards achieving our objective of a free trade area. The economic restructuring programme which the Government of India instituted in 1991 is expected to transform the lives of ordinary Indians as its benefits begin to take hold. My Government is committed to continuing and deepening

these economic reforms and enhancing India's participation in the world economy.

Mr. President, India has recently completed the largest electoral process ever undertaken in history. We have reaffirmed in the most emphatic way, our commitment to democracy. It is increasingly evident that in the 21st century, India will emerge as not only the world's largest democracy, but one which has overcome and transcended the variegated problems of underdevelopment.

We hope, therefore, that as democracy takes root throughout the world, it will also be reflected more fully in the structures and bodies of the United Nations which you served so ably, and where your most remarkable achievement was to bring towards fruition Namibia's aspiration to democratic freedom. We expect that the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, will truly be reformed to reflect both the needs of developing countries and current political realities.

At the bilateral level, as I said earlier, our relations have always been close. I am very pleased that businessmen and entrepreneurs from our two countries are discovering each other and are keen to embark upon economic partnerships and joint ventures. I am sure that the economic delegation you have brought with you would have extremely productive exchanges with their counterparts, and look forward to a much closer economic interaction between Finland and India.

Your visit, Excellency, will add a new dimension to our traditional ties, and help raise them to their true potential.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now ask you to join me in a toast to :

- the health of His Excellency President Ahtisaari and of Madame Ahtisaari;
- the well-being and prosperity of the friendly people of Finland and;
- the everlasting friendship and cooperation between Finland and India.

India Seeks Long-term Relations with China

IT IS A great pleasure to welcome the first President to visit India from the People's Republic of China. On behalf of the Government and the people of India, and on my own behalf, I extend to you and to your distinguished delegation a very warm welcome.

Our two countries are neighbours and we share a long border. The ties that bind us are many and reach back into the far recesses of history. Through millennia, we have interacted and contributed to each other's wisdom and to the progress of mankind. Our movement for national independence and your struggle for national liberation were both inspired by the desire to free ourselves from foreign yoke and to release the creative energies of our respective peoples for national reconstruction. Today, we must build upon the foundation of the numerous cultural and civilizational links and shared interests that unite us.

In recent years, India-China relations have steadily gathered momentum and substance. There have been a number of high-level visits since 1988 when our former Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi went to China. Our former President, Shri R. Venkataraman, and former Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao have visited China. We have welcomed Premier Li Peng and other high-ranking Chinese leaders in India. These high-level exchanges have permitted us to address, in a constructive spirit, all relevant issues in our bilateral relations. We take satisfaction from the growth of mutual understanding and cooperation evidenced in the bilateral agreements that have come about as a result of these exchanges. Our relations have acquired new maturity and content. Together we have travelled a long distance; much still remains to be done.

The world today stands at a new watershed. With the end of the Cold War, basic issues of peace, stability and development are being reassessed and approached with new terms of reference. The emerging world order is full of promise as well as contradictions. There are new opportunities but also new dilem-

mas. Unprecedented global cooperation coexists alongside fresh areas of conflict and pressures on developing countries.

India and China, countries and civilizational entities of sub-continental size, cannot be passive spectators in this changing environment. Our cooperation is critical to its evolution. The cooperation and friendship of Asia's two largest nations would be a powerful and enduring factor in promoting peace and stability in our continent and the world. We have a mutual interest in working together for peace, stability, development and an equitable world order. We must expand our cooperation in international fora to address our common concerns.

In the current changing international scene, the basic thrust of our foreign policy remains the preservation of India's identity as a democratic, pluralist, secular society, protection of its territorial integrity and promotion of the well-being of its people. We wish to work for rapid all-round growth and economic development of the South Asian region. The SAARC preferential trading arrangement is an important milestone in the creation of a South Asian Free Trade Area. We seek friendship with all our neighbours. Actions and developments that adversely affect the security environment in our region cause concern to us.

The Government and people of India are determined to concentrate on rapid economic and social development of our country. We do not wish to be deflected from this path. China is engaged in a similar endeavour. Both of us need a peaceful neighbourhood. We can learn and benefit from each other's experience as we seek to undertake a historic transformation of our two societies.

Friendship between India and China is dictated by the logic of history and the needs of the present. Our friendship is beneficial to and accords with the fundamental interests of our two peoples. Your visit to India affords us an opportunity to assess the current state and prospects of our relationship until the end of the century and beyond. Together, we can explore a long-term vision of India-China relations oriented to deal with the challenges of the 21st century. We can explore how our two nations should proceed along the path of good neighbourly relations that we have embarked upon. For our part, India seeks a relationship of constructive cooperation with our largest neighbour, China.

We are prepared to continue to work with you to resolve

outstanding differences on the boundary question. We must persevere in our joint efforts to find a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement within the framework of national interests and sentiments of both our peoples. Happily, our borders are peaceful. Both sides are determined that it should remain so. It is possible for us jointly to address other issues on which our positions differ. We must seek to deepen and broaden, through dialogue, our mutual understanding, since the dividend from this effort is peace, stability and cooperation in our relations.

There is great scope for us to exchange experiences, to learn from each other and to build up to new levels of cooperation. In recent years, our bilateral cooperation has expanded significantly but the untapped potential is immense. We must give a renewed impetus to our bilateral trade, economic cooperation and technological collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now propose a toast to :

- the good health and happiness of His Excellency, President Jiang Zemin and distinguished members of his delegation;
- the ever-growing friendship and cooperation between India and China and;
- the prosperity of our two countries and the happiness and well-being of our two peoples.

India and Malaysia Are Heirs to a Rich Tradition

I AM VERY pleased to receive from His Majesty Tuanku Ja'afar Ibni Al-Marhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, the Letter of Credence accrediting you as the High Commissioner of Malaysia to India, as well as the Letter of Recall of your predecessor. Please convey to His Majesty that I fully reciprocate the kind sentiments expressed by him, and would like

Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Dato Marzuki Mohammed Noor, High Commissioner-Designate of Malaysia, New Delhi, 7 December 1996

to extend to him my most cordial regards and best wishes for his personal health and well-being, as well as for the continued prosperity and welfare of the people of Malaysia. I would also like to extend to you a warm welcome to India.

India and Malaysia are heirs to a rich and flourishing tradition of mutually beneficial interaction. The commercial, maritime and cultural exchanges between our two peoples which date back several centuries, have played an important role in shaping the history of our respective regions and have created lasting affinities. These contacts have continued in more recent times, especially during the years of the anti-colonial freedom movement, which was marked by strong sympathy between our two peoples. This historical background created a climate of mutual goodwill which has facilitated the development of our relations, after India and Malaysia became sovereign independent countries.

In more recent times, our relations have developed steadily. The economic reform and restructuring programme being undertaken in India and the dynamic growth of the Malaysian economy have opened up immense new opportunities for partnership and cooperation. Bilateral trade and investment linkages and joint ventures are progressing apace. The private sectors of our two countries are playing an important role in accelerating the momentum of our bilateral economic cooperation.

This positive trend in economic cooperation has been supplemented by mutual goodwill and a progressively better understanding of our respective concerns and aspirations. India and Malaysia also have a well-established tradition of political dialogue, and contacts at various levels. In particular, high-level exchanges have played an important role in strengthening our relations. We look forward to welcoming Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahatir Bin Mohammed on his visit to India later this month to receive the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding.

India and Malaysia have also maintained a structured interaction in multilateral fora which has helped establish common ground on important regional and global issues. We are both committed to realising the unprecedented potential of South-South cooperation and are working together towards this end, not only in the UN and NAM, but also through cohesive South-South initiatives, such as the G-15. Malaysia is also a partner country in the

Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation which is to be launched shortly.

Our entry into full dialogue partnership with ASEAN, and membership of the ASEAN Regional Forum have added new facets to our bilateral relations, even as the growing substantive content of our bilateral relationship has enriched the India-ASEAN partnership.

We look forward to working with Malaysia to build a stable long-term relationship, on the basis of friendship, goodwill and mutual benefit.

Excellency, I am confident that your wide-ranging experience and skills in the diplomatic profession will help you to contribute to further strengthening the multi-faceted cooperation between our two countries. In this task, I would like to assure you of the fullest cooperation and assistance of my Government. I wish you a successful and pleasant term of duty in India.

Conflict in Afghanistan : Common Concern for India and Kazakhstan

IT IS A privilege and a pleasure for me to welcome Your Excellency and the distinguished members of your delegation to India. We regard your visit as being of vital importance in further strengthening and enhancing the warm and cordial multi-faceted relationship between our two countries.

In recent years, we have together built upon our ancient, historical ties and the strong bonds of friendship and understanding between our two countries. This mutual goodwill between the two peoples is appropriately reflected in an appreciation of each other's legitimate aspirations, concerns and security interests.

Our bilateral economic cooperation has made steady progress. Our economic reform programme and your own policies of economic restructuring and modernization have opened up immense

opportunities for mutually beneficial interaction between our two countries. Our businessmen and industrialists should fully draw upon our respective strengths and complementarities of a vast pool of trained manpower, huge reserves of natural resources, modern technology and a strong industrial infrastructure to foster new joint ventures and partnerships and to enhance the flows of bilateral trade and investment. The large number of bilateral agreements between our countries, including those which have just been concluded today, have established a strong framework for bilateral cooperation.

In addition to bilateral trade and investment, there exists a vast untapped potential for cooperation in the fields of science and technology, the sectors of oil and gas, space, medicine, small and medium-scale industries and peaceful use of nuclear energy among other areas. Furthermore, people-to-people contacts and exchanges in the field of education and culture would also enrich the relationship between our two countries.

Excellency, your country is playing an important role in strengthening peace, stability and security, both at the regional and international levels. We welcome your far-sighted and timely initiative relating to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia. We have participated in this exercise in a positive and constructive spirit.

For our part, we are making sustained efforts at the bilateral and other levels to create a harmonious environment in our region and neighbourhood. Within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the coming into effect of SAPTA last December is a significant development which is intended to lead to a South Asia Free Trade Area by the end of the century.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of a new century, the world faces immense new opportunities for partnership and cooperation as well as several problems of dilemmas. The scourge of terrorism, extremism and ethnic and sectarian violence threatens global peace and security. As large, multi-ethnic and pluralistic societies, we have the responsibility of working together against these destabilising and divisive phenomena.

A current development of great concern to both our countries is the continuing conflict in Afghanistan. India is committed to the stability, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Afghani-

stan as well as an end to foreign interference in that country. We share your concern that violation of those principles would adversely affect the entire region. There is no military solution to the Afghan conflict. It can be resolved only through dialogue and conciliation leading to the formation of a broad-based government with the participation of all groups. The people of Afghanistan must be given a full opportunity to resolve their problems by themselves, free from external interference or intervention. We fully support the efforts of the UN in this direction and are ready to work with other governments to achieve this end.

Excellency, we sincerely believe that friendship and cooperation between India and Kazakhstan would greatly benefit both our peoples and promote peace and stability in our respective regions. This friendship is enduring. It is based on mutual interest and shared values of peace, non-violence and tolerance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I request you to join me in raising a toast :

- to the health and personal well-being of His Excellency, President Nazarbaev;
- to the prosperity and well-being of the friendly people of Kazakhstan and;
- to the everlasting friendship and cooperation between our two great countries and peoples.

India's Progressive Relations with the European Union

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in accepting the Letter of Credence accrediting you as the Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Commission to India and in extending a warm welcome to you.

Accepting the credentials from His Excellency Mr. Michael McGeever, Ambassador-Designate of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Union, New Delhi, 17 December 1996

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey greetings to H.E. Mr. Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission and my best wishes to the people of the fifteen countries that comprise the European Union.

India and Europe have a flourishing tradition of contacts in diverse spheres. These bonds of partnership and cooperation in the economic, cultural and political areas are reinforced by shared fundamental values. Both India and the European Union are committed to the principles of democracy, secularism, free press, independent judiciary and the rule of law.

India was among the first developing countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Union and to set up a permanent Mission in Brussels, with an Ambassador accredited to the EU.

Following the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union has acquired a political identity and is adopting a more coordinated approach to foreign and security matters. It is therefore appropriate that the Indo-EU dialogue has evolved in keeping with these developments. The Joint Statement on political dialogue issued simultaneously with the third-generation Indo-EU Cooperation Agreement on Partnership & Development expresses the resolve of both parties to further their relations in political, economic, technological and cultural fields.

I am also happy to note that trade and economic relations between India and the European Union have shown great progress. Two-way trade over the last three years has increased at an average rate of 20 per cent. The EU is India's largest trading partner as it is the largest foreign investor in India. We welcome the enhanced interest of European companies to forge new partnerships and joint ventures with their Indian counterparts and to seize the immense opportunities for long-term economic cooperation arising out of our programme of economic reform and restructuring. India looks forward to the acceleration of mutually beneficial cooperation in the years to come.

We welcome the initiative of the European Commission, to issue a Communication on India, intended to foster dialogue between India and the European Union, which would further an understanding of our respective positions on issues of national and international importance. We are confident that the Communication

would provide an impetus for greater cooperation between India and the Union.

I would like to assure you, Mr. Ambassador, that in your personal endeavours to reinforce ties between India and the European Commission, you will receive the fullest cooperation of my Government.

May I wish you and your family a happy and successful tenure in India.

SAPTA—A Milestone in South Asian Resurgence

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to receive from His Excellency, President Kim Young Sam, the Letter of Credence accrediting you as Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India, as well as the Letter of Recall of your predecessor. Please convey to His Excellency, the President, that I fully reciprocate the kind sentiments expressed by him, and that I would like to extend to him my warm regards and best wishes for his personal health and well-being, as well as for the prosperity and happiness of the people of the Republic of Korea. I also extend a cordial welcome to you in India.

Ancient civilizations, our two countries, have a legacy of friendship forged by Buddhism and shared universal values. We have built upon this historical tradition and adapted it to meet the political and economic imperatives of modern times. Over the past decades, our relations have developed steadily in diverse areas.

The last few years have seen economic relations between India and the Republic of Korea grow with an accelerated tempo. The new opportunities unleashed by dynamic economic growth in the Republic of Korea and our own far-reaching programme of economic reform and restructuring, have created the environment for an enhanced, more intensive and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Our bilateral trade turnover is almost US \$ 2.0

billion. The Republic of Korea is one of the leading foreign investors in India. Contacts between the business representatives of the two countries have created more widespread awareness of each other's requirements and capabilities. Yet, there remains a vast untapped potential. Our two governments should together facilitate and further strengthen efforts to seize these opportunities.

This constructive trend in economic cooperation is matched by regular political dialogue which has resulted in a progressively better mutual understanding of the aspirations and concerns of our two countries. High-level exchanges of visits in recent years, and particularly, the visit of President Kim Young Sam to India in February 1996, have played an important role in this regard. We are ready to work with your Government to implement the understandings reached during that visit. We also look forward to further bilateral contacts, including the first meeting of the recently set up Joint Commission.

Flourishing bilateral contacts are also reflected in growing cooperation between our two countries in multilateral fora. We have a common approach to important regional and global, political and economic issues.

The growth of India-Republic of Korea relations is a part of the larger historical process of the resurgence of Asia. For our part, this involves the reactivation, and redefinition in a new context, of our traditionally close relations with other countries in Asia, near and far. Thus, in South Asia, the process of regional cooperation is moving forward steadily. The South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA), which came into effect in December 1995, is a milestone on the road to establishing a South Asia Free Trade Area by the end of the century. In South East Asia, India is now a full-dialogue partner of ASEAN and a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. Likewise, our links with countries in Central Asia, the Gulf and West Asia are also developing with a new vigour. These developments will help create linkages which will contribute to strengthening peace, stability and security in our own and in adjoining regions.

We are committed to working with the Republic of Korea to build a stable, long-term relationship on the basis of goodwill and mutual benefit.

Excellency, you are taking up your assignment in India at an important stage in the relations between our two countries as we embark into an era of a more vigorous and intensive

cooperation. I am sure that with your wide-ranging experience in diplomacy, you will be in a position to contribute significantly to the strengthening of our multi-faceted relationship. I assure you that in this task, you will receive the full cooperation and assistance of my Government. I wish you a successful and pleasant term of duty in India.

Jawaharlal Nehru—A Beaconlight of Peace

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to welcome in our midst His Excellency Dato' Seri Mahathir Bin Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia and Datin Seri Dr. Siti Hasmah.

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is no stranger to India. We have had the privilege of receiving him in New Delhi on earlier occasions. This visit is, however, imbued with a very special significance. Today our nation honours him in the name of the builder of modern India, our visionary leader and thinker, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Panditji articulated the voice of India and of a resurgent Asia awakening from the deep and slothful slumber induced by colonial subjugation. He gave meaning to the longing of a people eager to control their own destiny, and to prosper, progress and participate on an equal footing in the comity of nations. He expressed the enthusiasm of the people of India, indeed, of Asia at the dawn of a new era of freedom and independence in a speech at the Asian Relations Conference on 23 March 1947, thus :

“Asia is again finding herself . . . There are powerful creative impulses and new vitality in all the peoples of Asia . . . Strong winds are blowing over Asia . . . Let us have faith in these great new forces and the dream which is taking shape. Let us have faith in the human spirit which Asia has symbolized for these long ages past.”

While conferring the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 1994 on His Excellency Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, New Delhi, 20 December 1996

India's voice then, as it is today, is for cooperation, conciliation and concord; for peaceful co-existence, partnership, tolerance and respect for diversity throughout the world.

Mr. Prime Minister, we welcome you as a symbol of a vibrant Asia. We admire you as a leader who has stood throughout his life for the principles and values which were illumined by Pandit Nehru and are cherished by the Indian people. Your stewardship at a critical juncture in your nation's destiny, has resulted in dynamic growth and all-round prosperity for the people of your country. Significant strides have been made in achieving sustainable growth with equity. Malaysia has emerged in the front ranks of the 'Asian Tigers' who represent the new dynamic spirit of this ancient continent. Malaysia's vision of a strong and resilient nation, based on shared values, a common identity, a shared destiny and an emotional oneness and unity is a vision which all pluralistic societies share.

Mr. Prime Minister, your vision is not limited merely to the promotion of well-being and prosperity in Malaysia. It encompasses the peoples of Asia, developing countries as a whole and indeed, all humanity. You have voiced the aspirations, the fears and concerns of the countries of the South. You have always stood for a democratic international order where the voice of the South is heard and respected.

While striving for a more equitable world, your efforts for greater interaction and cooperation among developing countries have met with success. The Group of Fifteen which symbolizes South-South cooperation, is a product of your vigorous and sustained work along with like-minded leaders of other member countries. Addressing the Second Summit of Group of Fifteen in Caracas in Venezuela on 27 November 1991, you had stressed the vital importance of such cooperation, thus :

"We must work together to maximize our strength and to speak with one voice. We must take advantage of our mutual potential which has been so long neglected. If we want an equitable world in which we are not marginalized, we must work for it pragmatically and realistically ourselves."

As fellow Asians, we in India congratulate you and take pride in your success. Our two countries share ancient bonds of friendship and cooperation, trade and commerce, culture, language and spiritual traditions. In India, your great peninsula has been

known as 'Swarnabhumi' or the Land of Gold. In recent years, we have built upon these age-old ties and have laid solid foundations for enhanced interaction in diverse spheres for the mutual benefit of our peoples. A buoyant bilateral trade and investment partnership is matched by flourishing exchanges in the spheres of education and culture. With the valuable support of Malaysia and other ASEAN countries, and your own personal involvement, India is now a full dialogue partner of ASEAN and a participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum. India seeks a more meaningful and stronger interaction with countries of the dynamic Asia-Pacific region.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of a new century and millennium, the world is faced with immense opportunities for partnership and cooperation. As you have said, the age of ideology is over and battlefields are being converted into market-places. The goal of a peaceful and prosperous world, where countries are not divided into antagonistic blocs of East and West, rich and poor, first and third worlds, is no longer a dream. It is realistic, it is achievable. Yet, the international community also faces several dilemmas. Ethnic conflicts and tensions, the growth of terrorism and extremism, illegal trade in narcotics and the scourge of new and deadly diseases such as AIDS threaten to rend the fabric of peace which we wish to weave. None of these problems are insurmountable if we all realize the importance of collective action, based on mutual trust and goodwill, to redress these difficulties in an increasingly inter-dependent world. This conviction is expressed in a beautiful proverb from your tradition :

"Ke bukit sama kita daki
Ke lurah sama kita turuni"
(Together we climb the hill
Together we descend into the valley)

The same thought has been expressed by our civilization in these words :

"सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्।
समानं मंत्रम् अभिमंत्रये व :
समानेन वो हविषा जुहोभि।
समानी व आकुतिः समाना हृदयानि व :
समानम् अस्तु वो मी यथा वः सुसहासति।"

(Assemble, speak among yourselves as one, be united in your minds, partake together of common benefits,
 May your aims be one and true,
 May your assembly be harmonious,
 A common purpose do I lay before you; address your endeavours unitedly,
 Common be your aim, and your hearts united;
 May you be of one mind that all may gain true happiness)

In more recent times, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had stressed the importance of cooperation and concerted action in these memorable words :

“All the nations and peoples are too closely knit together, today, for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible, so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

This profound insight of Pandit Nehru is more and more relevant in contemporary times.

Mr. Prime Minister, we felicitate you today as an illustrious son of Malaysia, a representative of a vibrant and dynamic Asia, a distinguished votary and a world leader committed to the timeless values of peace, equality and justice.

I have great pleasure in conferring upon you the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 1994. I extend my warmest greetings to you and wish you ever greater success in the years to come.

India and Israel : Two Civilizations One in Spirit

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to extend a warm and cordial welcome to Your Excellency, to Madame Weizman, as well as the distinguished members of your delegation, on the first visit to India by a Head of State of Israel.

Banquet in honour of the President of the Republic of Israel, His Excellency Mr. Ezer Weizman and Madame Reuma Weizman, New Delhi, 30 December 1996

Mr. President, you are no stranger to India. I hope your brief sojourn will give you the opportunity, not only to relive an old personal link and to rediscover something of the eternal spirit of India, but also to get an idea of the processes of dynamic transformation taking place in our country and to sense the friendly sentiments of our people.

Excellency, we welcome you not merely as the Head of State of Israel. We welcome you as a representative of an ancient civilization which has contributed in substantial measure to the development of human society. We in India have had a vibrant interchange with your tradition over the centuries. The Jewish community in India has flourished and prospered in peace and harmony in our pluralistic and tolerant society. Indeed, they have enriched our heritage and have made sterling contributions to the development of our economy. Several leaders of the Jewish community supported our freedom movement. The bonds of friendship between our two nations have been nurtured by the presence of the Indian Jews in Israel.

As old cultures and modern nations, our two countries have stood steadfast in their commitment to the universal values of humanism and democracy. In India, there is deep admiration and esteem for your rich cultural legacy, innovative enterprises and the rapid economic development of your country. Our interest in your tradition has been reciprocated in the work of several Jewish scholars who have delved deep into and illumined our pluralistic culture for the world. We were touched by the words of David Ben Gurion, following Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom. In a telegram addressed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on 1 February 1948, he said, "the example of Mahatma Gandhi's life and teaching will always shine like a beacon to guide men of goodwill everywhere along the path of goodness and human worth". Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography written in 1936 was translated into Hebrew soon after its publication. In that fateful period of the Second World War, when the spectre of Nazism was rising and casting its evil shadow on the history of humankind, India was the one country where Jews had lived since antiquity as equal, respected and valued compatriots in our national life. Indeed in 1937, the city of Mumbai, elected as Mayor, an eminent representative of the Jewish community, Mr. E. Moses, whose services are recalled with affection, even today.

After the establishment of full-fledged diplomatic relations

and the opening of resident missions five years ago, our bilateral relationship has grown from strength to strength in diverse spheres. A flourishing bilateral trade is matched by buoyant cooperation in key areas such as agriculture, science and technology, communications and information technology, among others. Exchanges between the business sectors of our two countries have progressed well. We welcome the business delegation which is accompanying Your Excellency and trust they will forge fruitful contacts with their Indian counterparts. Our cultural ties are also becoming stronger. We have expanded our contacts in the sphere of education by promoting exchanges between academic and research centres, and in other functional sectors. People-to-people contacts and exchanges have grown and contributed to mutual understanding and goodwill between our two countries.

Our bilateral talks today have underlined our shared desire and resolve to work together to realize the great promise and potential for cooperation. The progress we have made in identifying projects in diverse sectors is ample proof that we can purposefully enhance our interaction. The Demonstration Farm Project for transfer of technology in agriculture, which you would launch tomorrow, is but one example of the new opportunities for partnership.

Our two countries have sought to harness modern science and technology to accelerate economic growth and improve the well-being of the people. Israel's achievements in this regard and your dynamic growth processes are widely known. India too has a record of steady economic development. Our far-reaching programme of economic reform and restructuring has mobilized the creative energies of our people and generated significant growth impulses in our economy. We have a vast pool of highly technically trained manpower. All these factors have created new complementarities and opportunities for enhanced economic cooperation and partnership, which we should fully seize. Our business sectors have a special responsibility in this regard. We need to create further awareness of capabilities and requirements on both sides.

Your visit, Excellency, bears testimony to the importance which both countries attach to our relations, and to our shared objective and desire to further strengthen our multi-faceted cooperation. We are ready to work with your Government, business

and other sectors to build a stable relationship, on the basis of goodwill and mutual benefit.

We believe that among the essential elements of a peaceful world order conducive to economic growth and prosperity, are, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, meaningful steps towards complete and general disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, a representative, more democratic, United Nations structure, and equitable global economic relations. We are ready to work with Israel and other like-minded countries to realize these objectives, which would promote regional and global peace, stability and security.

In our region, we have made sustained efforts to promote harmony and cooperation. This is reflected in recent positive developments in our relations with most of our South Asian neighbours. We have signed a historic agreement on sharing river waters with Bangladesh. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, now over 10 years old, has made steady progress particularly in the area of economic cooperation. The preferential trading arrangement is operational and is an important step towards the establishment of a free trading area in South Asia. There has also been steady improvement of relations with China. These events are indicative of a widely shared desire for cooperation and dialogue.

Our search for peace and security extends to West Asia. We have had a multi-dimensional historical interaction with the region as a whole. West Asia continues to be of political, strategic and economic importance to us. We sincerely wish the nations of the region to develop in conditions of peace, stability, security and nations of the region to develop in conditions of peace, stability, security and prosperity. These considerations provide the rationale for our consistent support for the Middle East Peace Process, and readiness to contribute to it. Our approach is moored squarely in the parameters accepted by all parties involved in the Madrid Peace Conference, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, aimed at a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, enabling all States in the region to co-exist peacefully within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. We trust that within this framework, all parties will strive to build upon the agreements and understanding already achieved towards the eventual goals.

Excellency, the last years of the twentieth century have been

marked by historic trends—the end of the cold war, the compelling urge for cooperation in place of confrontation, the rediscovery of strong regional and cultural identities, the phenomenal growth of technology, the steady increase of global trade and investment and the acute awareness of environmental issues, among others, which have a strong bearing on human welfare and progress. New and complex social and political problems too have arisen. India and Israel, each in its own way, in keeping with its cultural traditions, is responding to these unprecedented new opportunities and challenges. The next millennium carries the hope of a new era of global peace, and cooperation. India-Israel friendship can contribute to realizing this dream.

Excellency, I wish you and your delegation a fruitful and pleasant stay in our country. I am confident that your visit will mark a milestone in the development of our multi-faceted and friendly relations.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I now request you to join me in raising a toast :

- to the health and personal well-being of His Excellency President Weizman and Madame Weizman;
- to the peace and prosperity of the friendly people of Israel; and
- to the growing friendship and cooperation between India and Israel.

India—A Staunch Friend of Cyprus

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to welcome you and the members of your distinguished delegation to India.

The people of Cyprus and India are heirs to ancient civilizations which have contributed in substantial measure to the world heritage of art, science and philosophical and spiritual traditions.

In turn, our own ethos has been shaped by the myriad influences which we have received. A flourishing commerce since antiquity, not only of goods and commodities, but of ideas and thought between the Hellenic and Indian civilizations, has enriched our two cultures. Important aspects of our ancient heritage and way of life have been chronicled for us by Megasthenes, the Greek envoy at the court of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. His work, *Indica*, is a valuable record of that era.

Our traditional bonds and contacts have provided a solid foundation upon which to build and strengthen the extremely friendly and close political ties which exist between our two modern states. Happily, this closeness, evident since the period of Archbishop Makarios and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, continues till today. We have both known what it is to struggle for freedom and we have both defended our sovereignty and democracy against difficult odds. It is thus perfectly natural that our relations should be so cordial. I am confident that your visit will further deepen and strengthen the interaction between India and Cyprus to our mutual benefit.

Our bilateral economic relations will be placed on a stronger footing with the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation in Tourism last year, and the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Merchant Shipping, which we expect to conclude shortly. India's economic reform and restructuring programme has opened up immense opportunities for mutually beneficial trade and investment partnerships and joint ventures between business communities in Cyprus and India. I am confident that the economic delegation accompanying you will have very productive and fruitful exchanges with their Indian counterparts. I look forward to a more enhanced and diversified economic interaction between Cyprus and India.

Our two countries have cooperated closely in the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth. We hope that we will intensify this cooperation in multilateral fora, particularly, in the context of a positively restructured and renewed UN.

The beautiful island of Cyprus has experienced division and demarcation since 1974. We have consistently supported the sovereignty, independence, unity, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus as well as the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General to find a permanent solution to the Cyprus

issue in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. We believe that it is possible to find a just and viable solution to the Cyprus issue which respects the aspirations of all the Cypriot people within the overall framework of a single sovereignty and international personality for Cyprus. It is our fervent hope that this will soon be realized.

Excellency, following the dramatic changes in Europe over the last few years, we hope there will be an era of peace and cooperation in your region. We are glad to note that Cyprus will soon begin negotiations towards accession to the European Union and we hope that Cyprus will work towards ensuring that, politically and economically, the European Union is an open entity. The European Union is India's leading economic partner, and we have a natural interest in seeing it remain open and outward-looking. Cyprus, as a country with strong international interests, will, we are sure, work towards this objective.

In our region as well, we are passing through an era of great change. SAARC has recently made operational its preferential trading arrangements, which should lead on to a free trade area and a more intensive economic interaction for mutual benefit, amongst countries of South Asia.

The end of the Cold War era has witnessed the emergence of new challenges and threats to the interests of pluralistic democracies from the forces of aggression, terrorism and cross-border crimes. We remain committed to combating these challenges. Our greatest strength is the commitment to Democracy, Secularism, the Rule of Law and the quest for peace, friendship and cooperation. We are confident of the support of friendly countries like Cyprus in this struggle.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great joy, therefore, to welcome again the President of Cyprus and Mrs. Lilla-Irene Clerides.

May I now request you to join me in a toast to :

- the health of His Excellency, President Clerides and of Mrs. Clerides
- the well-being and prosperity of the friendly people of Cyprus; and
- everlasting friendship and cooperation between Cyprus and India.

India and Namibia — Shared Perspective of Freedom

IT IS WITH great pleasure that I welcome an old friend to India whose leadership of SWAPO was central to the successful culmination of the liberation struggle of the Namibian people and removal of the last bastion of colonialism from Africa. On behalf of the people of India, and on my own behalf, I extend a very warm welcome to Your Excellency and your delegation and wish you all a pleasant and fruitful stay in India.

I vividly recall my visit to your beautiful country in June, 1995. The affection showered on me and my delegation by the Government and the friendly people of Namibia is fresh in our minds. It was evident even in our brief stay, that under Your Excellency's wise and able leadership, Namibia was marching ahead with vigour and steadfastness towards progress and prosperity. This is a matter of great admiration and pride to us in India who have always identified with the struggle waged by the people of Namibia.

Namibia's long and arduous struggle for independence was full of sacrifices and upheavals. India too had suffered the inequities and humiliation of colonialism. Our great national leaders always had a global perspective as they strove for freedom. Even as we struggled against the colonial power in India, our leaders expressed their solidarity with the struggle of oppressed nations and people around the world, especially in Africa. When India achieved Independence 50 years ago, she intensified her support for liberation movements fighting colonialism and apartheid. When Namibia achieved independence, the people of India rejoiced with their sisters and brothers in that "beautiful land of the Savannas."

Free and independent Namibia is today making rapid strides towards improving the welfare of its people and fulfilling their expectations. As your country moves along the path of national reconstruction, I assure you that we in India stand by your side, ready to share, in a spirit of South-South cooperation, our experience in diverse fields of national endeavour. We consider it our

privilege and duty to do so and to foster and strengthen our bilateral relations in a manner truly reflecting our common aspirations.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that relations between our countries have grown from strength to strength. Our political contacts have been frequent. Technical and economic cooperation is continuing with efficiency and a sense of purpose. We are happy that Namibia has effectively utilized Indian assistance for capacity building and for honing the technical skills of its talented people. Our commercial and economic ties are growing satisfactorily as both countries become increasingly aware of potential areas of cooperation. During Your Excellency's stay here we look forward to having an exchange of views on matters of international, regional and mutual interest.

Excellency, in recent years, immense new opportunities for peace and progress have opened up. The elimination of East-West tensions has helped transform the international scene. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has emerged as a credible organization dedicated to strengthening the peace process and promoting integration. In our own region, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has made definite progress.

As we enter a new millennium, strenuous efforts have to be made to establish a more equitable global order with greater focus on the needs of the developing world. International organizations such as the UN must democratize and reform to address the aspirations of the large majority of humanity. Together, we have to build and revivify the Non-Aligned Movement, as an instrument for promoting Peace, Disarmament and Development, and to build a more just world order, two-thirds of which is represented by members of the NAM. We hope the NAM Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi later in the year will appraise and re-evaluate the direction and momentum of NAM's progress and deliberate on what needs to be done.

Excellency, India and Namibia have been staunch allies in the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination. We have now the task before us of contributing to the greater goal of building a new world - a world blessed with Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, a world of prosperity and happiness and hope.

May I invite you all to rise and join me in a toast:

- to the good health and well-being of His Excellency President Nujoma;
- to the welfare and prosperity of the people of Namibia and:
- to everlasting friendship and cooperation between the people of India and Namibia.

India Has Age-old Ties with Turkmenistan

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to extend to you and your delegation a warm and cordial welcome to India. We are happy to receive you again in our midst and specially at a time when we are celebrating fifty years of our Independence.

The cultural ties and exchanges between the peoples of India and Turkmenistan go back deep into antiquity. You national poet, Makhtumkuli has referred to India and her culture in glowing terms. The Mughal Emperor Akbar's tutor, Bairam Khan, has a niche in Indian history. The links between our countries were renewed by Prime Minister Nehru who visited Ashgabat in June, 1955 in the early and formative years of our young Republic. This rich legacy of contacts provides us with a firm foundation on which to build and strengthen friendly relations between our two countries.

Excellency, there exists vast potential for enhanced economic and commercial linkages between India and Turkmenistan in diverse areas and particularly in the hydro-carbons sector. The setting up of an economic and reliable trade route between India and Turkmenistan will provide a fillip to our bilateral cooperation. The trilateral agreement between India, Turkmenistan and Iran on the transit of goods, is an important step in this direction.

We in India, are aware of the historic process of transition in Turkmenistan under your wise and far-sighted leadership. In a spirit of friendship, we have always been willing to contribute to the process of development of Turkmenistan. We are gratified that joint ventures have been set up in your country in key sectors using Indian credit lines. We hope that this will be the beginning of a new era of collaborative ventures between our two countries in other sectors such as food processing, light industrial goods including consumer products, agro-industries, small and medium enterprises and petro-chemicals.

Both, India and Turkmenistan have a vital stake in the development of peace and stability in their respective neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, the conflict in Afghanistan continues and the suffering of the people remains unabated. India supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan and believes that the conflict there cannot be resolved by military means or by the exclusion in the future political set-up of any of the ethnic groups present in Afghanistan. We also support the efforts of the United Nations directed towards the resolution of the conflict. We remain concerned about the continuing foreign interference in Afghanistan which prevents the resolution of the Afghan problem. Our traditional role as a friend and a well-wisher of Afghanistan is recognized and our humanitarian assistance to that beleaguered country will continue.

In South Asia, we are making sustained efforts at the bilateral level as well as collectively to create a harmonious environment of cooperation for mutual benefit. SAARC has made steady progress over the decade since it was established. The South Asia Preferential Trading Arrangement has come into effect and is intended to lead to a South Asia Free Trade Area by the end of the century. These developments reflect a trend of far-reaching significance in the region for peace, stability and cooperation and a recognition of the importance of building relations on the basis of commonalties rather than highlighting differences.

Excellency, we view your visit as of immense significance in the development of friendly relations between our two countries. It will provide a major impetus to building deeper and more intensive, mutually beneficial contacts between the peoples and Governments of our two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I request you to join me in raising a toast:

- to the health and personal well-being of President Saparmurat A. Niyazov;
- to the prosperity and well-being of the friendly people of Turkmenistan, and;
- to the lasting friendship and cooperation between India and Turkmenistan.

India and South Africa : Shared Ideals in Spirit of Freedom

IT IS WITH immense pleasure that we welcome once again in our midst one of Africa's most valiant sons, a distinguished nation-builder, an outstanding statesman, a symbol of indomitable courage and compassion, of strength and determination.

We welcome you as one whose suffering and sacrifice remind us of the heroism of our own great leaders, the foremost among whom Mahatma Gandhi — was a unique symbol of the bonds of friendship between our two peoples. It was in South Africa that Gandhiji discovered and first practised 'Satyagraha'. The non-violent struggle in India under Gandhiji's guidance lasted about four decades. The struggle of the South African people was to last longer, for four more decades; decades when the human spirit was sought to be subdued and suppressed by those who controlled the levers of State power, only to emerge ever triumphant and victorious. During your struggle, you regarded our heroes — Gandhi and Nehru — as yours. Likewise, leaders of the South African resurgence — Luthuli, Tambo, Mandela and Sisulu — were household names for us.

Freedom has relieved us of one kind of burden, but has brought in its wake greater responsibilities, including the need to

meet the challenge of the people's rising expectations. In the last three years, South Africa has attempted something which, once again, has endeared your country to us. I refer to the remarkable attempts made under your leadership to weld the different communities of South Africa together into a new partnership. The manner in which South Africa has tried to heal old wounds without recrimination, to come to terms with the past without vengefulness, to help the hitherto disempowered to find new opportunities without engendering insecurity among others, is an achievement of monumental dimensions. In the two R's - Reconstruction and Reconciliation - that you have given to your people, you have provided them the opportunity to realize the vision of a new South Africa where, in Gandhiji's own words "All the different races comingle and produce a civilization that perhaps the world has not yet seen."

We are glad that our bilateral ties are poised for all-round expansion. Our trade has grown, several visits have been exchanged and a number of agreements have been signed, holding out the promise of extensive economic, technological and cultural cooperation between our countries. In the realm of defence cooperation, we have made a good beginning. We look forward to exploring many more fields of common interest where India and South Africa can enrich each other.

We can also derive satisfaction from the continuing convergence of our world view. Your Excellency may rest assured that South Africa's recent call for a "strategic partnership" with India has found a willing and positive response. Both of us remain convinced of the validity of Afro-Asian solidarity and of the need for developing countries to work in concert. An outstanding opportunity has presented itself to us in the recent setting-up of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. As founder members of this body we can together revive, strengthen and enhance to higher dimensions, the centuries-old ties that linked the countries of this Rim until they were sundered and distorted by the colonizing powers.

We rejoice in the fact that the countries of Southern Africa have forged a cooperative set of relations among themselves through the instrumentality of the Southern African Development Community. We are particularly glad that Your Excellency now heads this important body. Regional peace and cooperation are essential prerequisites for development. In our own region, the

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is a constructive expression of our belief that national effort must be complemented by regional cooperation.

India has always believed in the policy of peaceful co-existence and mutual non-interference. We have taken significant steps to foster cooperation, peace and security in our neighbourhood. At the same time, the large-scale induction of sophisticated arms in the region has increased our disquietude. While we would continue our efforts towards lowering tensions and creating an atmosphere conducive to cooperative development in our region, we cannot afford to neglect our security imperatives.

In a few days from now, Foreign Ministers from Non-Aligned countries will gather in New Delhi for their Twelfth Ministerial Meeting. While South Africa has entered the Non-aligned Movement in its governmental capacity only recently, it has been at the heart of the Movement ever since its inception in 1961. There has scarcely been a NAM meeting when the South African question was not part of its agenda. Today we derive satisfaction from the presence of South Africa lending its full weight and support to the Movement which is called upon to strengthen its role of addressing global imbalances and inequalities and be a vital instrument for peace, development and disarmament.

We have appreciated the personal initiatives you have taken in the matter of the democratic reform of the United Nations. These need to be carried further so as to ensure that the world body becomes truly representative of its present membership. We must also collectively resist the imposition of discriminatory global disarmament mechanisms. We continue to believe that the only way in which the world can achieve genuine peace and security is to strive for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in a time-bound framework. We would like to cooperate with South Africa closely in achieving this end.

Our two countries have been inspired by the same ideals and share a common vision of the world. Destiny and the aspirations of our people require that we work together to build a safer, more equitable and prosperous world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now invite you to join me in raising a toast to:

— the good health and well-being of President Nelson Mandela;

- the progress and prosperity of the people of South Africa; and
- the everlasting friendship and cooperation between India and South Africa.

India and Philippines Committed to Peace and Non- violence

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in welcoming the President of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Mr. Fidel V. Ramos and the members of his distinguished delegation to India. This visit is endowed with special significance for several reasons. It is the first-ever State Visit to India by the President of the Philippines. It is also a happy coincidence that we have the honour to receive you during the Golden Jubilee year of our Independence.

Excellency, the relationship between India and Philippines is underpinned by a common adherence to the cherished values of peace and non-violence, democracy and pluralism. Your glorious EDSA revolution whose hallmark was non-violent resistance, struck a deep chord in India and reminded the world of the eternal relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha. Similarly, the striving and yearning for Freedom, Equality and Justice expressed in the deeply-moving poetry of your national poet, Jose Rizal, finds an echo in the work of our own poet, Rabindranath Tagore. Both our countries have remained steadfast in our commitment to these principles and ideals. We have demonstrated convincingly that democratic freedoms are essential for nation-building, modernization and for the progress and prosperity of our peoples.

Your Excellency, these enduring affinities between our two countries provide a solid foundation on which to build and enhance our bilateral relationship. Bilateral trade has increased in recent

years and there is scope for further increase. There also exists considerable potential for direct investment through greater industrial, financial and technical joint ventures in both our countries. The economic reform and restructuring programme in India has opened up new opportunities for partnership for mutual benefit, between the two countries. I am confident that the business delegation accompanying Your Excellency will forge useful contacts and productive partnerships with their Indian counterparts. Our two countries should together strengthen efforts to draw upon the complementarities which exist in areas such as pharmaceuticals, information technology, energy, science and technology, small and medium industries and railways.

In recent years, India has strengthened its interaction with countries of East and South-East Asia, both bilaterally as well as in the framework of regional organizations such as ASEAN. India values her interaction with ASEAN as a Dialogue Partner and in the context of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). It will be our endeavour to strengthen our links with ASEAN and its member countries in diverse spheres.

In our immediate neighbourhood, we are making sustained efforts at bilateral and other levels to create a harmonious environment conducive to enhanced cooperation and partnership between the countries of the region. SAARC has recently made operational its preferential trading arrangements which are intended to lead on to a South Asia Free Trade Area by the end of the century.

Your Excellency, we view your visit as a historic occasion and an opportunity to open a new chapter in bilateral relations between our two countries. I am sure that it will provide a significant impetus to deepening and enhancing our relations and imparting richer content to the multi-faceted cooperation between our two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request you to join me in a toast to:

- the health and happiness of His Excellency President Ramos;
- the continued progress and prosperity of the people of the Philippines; and
- the abiding friendship between India and the Philippines.

IX
MESSAGES

Neglect of Girl Child Is A Blot on Society

I AM GLAD to learn that the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust is marking its Golden Jubilee by organising a Seminar on the Girl Child and Women's Literacy by the year 2000.

Neglect of the girl child is a blot on our society. There is, however, a growing recognition that literacy and education are key to improving their status. It is by acknowledging and encouraging women's contribution in diverse fields that national development will succeed. It is appropriate that this important issue in our social agenda is being addressed on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Trust.

I send my best wishes on the occasion.

Prosthodontics — Need for Primary Prevention of Disease

I AM HAPPY to know that the World Congress on Prosthodontics is being organised for the first time in India in February 1995 at New Delhi.

The scope of dental treatment today has greatly enlarged and includes high-quality prosthodontics. But such special treatment is restricted only to major cities, and most rural and many urban populations have almost no access to even basic emergency care. I hope the Congress would deliberate on the need for primary prevention and intervention services to all, especially the rural and the under-privileged sections of our society.

I send my greetings to the Indian Prosthodontics Society as well as the participating doctors and wish the Congress all success.

Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave — A Unique Vision of Freedom

I AM GLAD to learn that the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan and Association for Sarva Seva Farm are commemorating the 125th Gandhi Jayanti and the centenary celebrations of Acharya Vinoba Bhave by organising Khadi and Village Exhibitions in Tamil Nadu.

Bapu and his chosen disciple, Vinobaji, had a unique contribution to make to our freedom movement. Independence for them was a step in achieving the greater liberation of humanity. Their vision of freedom emphasised its economic aspects and the need for self-reliance. Khadi was its potent social and economic symbol. As Bapu said, “Khadi is the breath of national life like ‘Swaraj’. To give up Khadi would be to sell the masses — the soul of India.”

I send my best wishes on the occasion.

Compassion, Truth and Love—Basis of All Religions

I AM GLAD to learn that the centenary celebrations of Ma Anandamayee will be taking place on 3 May 1995.

The message of Ma Anandamayee is of compassion, truth and love. She believed that this is the basis for all religions, which were but different paths leading to the ultimate goal. Her contribution to the composite culture of India was valuable, as was her reaffirmation of our ancient heritage.

I extend my best wishes on this occasion for the success of the centenary celebrations.

Women's Improved Status for National Progress

I SEND MY greetings to all the Members of the Indian Red Cross Society on the occasion of the World Red Cross Day.

An improvement in the status of women in our society is one of our national priorities. Unless women are encouraged to contribute fully to development, progress cannot take place. This recognition is vital and I am glad that the Red Cross Society has chosen as its theme for this year : "Dignity for All; Respect for Women."

Small Family Norm Vital to National Reconstruction

ACCEPTANCE OF THE small family norm is vitally important for the success of our efforts in diverse tasks of national reconstruction designed to enhance the quality of life of our people.

On the occasion of World Population Day 1995, I extend my greetings and good wishes to all who are working to promote the small family norm.

Dhyan Chand - A Life Dedicated to Sports

DHYAN CHAND, KNOWN as the 'Wizard of the Stick' symbolized India's supremacy in hockey. As a player and a coach, he devoted his life to strengthening sports in our country so that we could match international standards. His very name evokes qualities of skill, dedication and fair play. As the inspiration of a generation, it is appropriate that his birthday should be declared as 'Sports Day'.

May Dhyan Chand's legacy contribute to the strengthening of our national capabilities in the field of sports.

Role of Teachers Is Crucial to Human Development

WE HONOUR ON the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan the fraternity of teachers in our country of which he was such an eminent member. On the occasion of Teachers' Day, I extend my felicitations and good wishes to all teachers.

Teachers have a critically important role in the development of human resources — our greatest asset. Teachers impart knowledge and skills, shape our character and liberate our minds. In formative years, they are our role models embodying qualities of truth and virtue. Their responsibilities are immense, for it is through their endeavours that our aims and aspirations are realized.

Let us appreciate the contribution of the teachers of India and accord to them full respect and support.

Exemplary Service of Indian Armed Forces

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in extending my cordial greetings to all ranks in the Armed Forces of India on the occasion of the Armed Forces Flag Day on 7 December 1995.

India's Armed Forces have achieved great distinction in the service of the country in times of war and peace. Their patriotism, valour and sacrifice has earned them a special place in the hearts of the people. The Flag Day is an occasion to express solidarity with them through generous donations. I am sure that all of us will liberally contribute to the Flag Day Fund for the welfare of the defence personnel.

I send my best wishes for the success of the Armed Forces Flag Day.

Children Are the Future of India

TODAY'S CHILDREN WILL be tomorrow's citizens who will shape the course of our destiny. In their welfare, education and health lies the future of India. Panditji, whose love and affection for children was overflowing, visualised the nurturing of children as a national priority. Appropriately, the nation celebrates his birthday as Children's Day.

On the occasion of Children's Day 1995, I pray for the welfare of all the children of India and extend to the organisations and individuals working for their good my support and best wishes.

Signal Contribution of Konkkanis to Indian Culture

KONKANIS HAVE A proud history dating back to the period of the Puranas, and by their manifold contributions in diverse fields, Konkkanis have enriched the culture and ethos of India.

Art, literature and music, administration, finance and politics, science, technology and engineering, as well as trade, commerce and industry are just some of the fields in which Konkkanis have excelled. More importantly, Konkkanis have contributed to India's heritage of pluralism, synthesis, oneness and harmony.

I am happy to know that the First World Konkani Convention is being held at Mangalore in December 1995.

I have great pleasure in extending my greetings and good wishes to all the participants in the Convention, and I am sure that the deliberations in this meeting will highlight the noble values at the core of Konkani culture, and take our great country forward.

Prophet Mohammad's Teachings Have Eternal Relevance

THE TEACHINGS OF Prophet Mohammad are of eternal relevance to humanity. Let us draw inspiration from his message of compassion, sacrifice, universal brotherhood and service, and work for harmony, unity and prosperity of our motherland.

I am happy to know that the Milad-un-Nabi Committee, New Delhi is holding a function to celebrate the birthday of Hazrat Mohammad Saheb.

On this occasion, I have great pleasure in sending my best wishes to all.

Advancement in Surgery Can Help Relieve Human Suffering

PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE surgery, an advanced area of medical science, is being increasingly used in the treatment of human diseases, injuries and deformities. Innovative study and research in this field could contribute substantially to relieving human suffering.

I am glad that a National Conference is being organized in October, 1996 by the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India as it would provide an opportunity to the experts to discuss the latest development in this sphere of medicine and its practical applications.

On this occasion I have pleasure in extending my felicitations to the organizers as well as participants and wish the Conference all success.

IAF—Sentinel of Our Skies

I AM HAPPY to know that the Indian Air Force is celebrating its 64th Anniversary on 8 October 1996.

The Indian Air Force, the sentinel of our skies, has a great tradition of dedicated service to our nation. Loyal and devoted professionals of the Indian Air Force maintain vigil over our air space, and protect the integrity of our motherland. The role of our Air Force in assisting civil authority and bringing succour to the needy during natural calamities is also commendable. The nation is proud of their efforts.

I am confident that the Indian Air Force would continue to maintain the highest standards of professional excellence in the service of our country.

On this special occasion, I extend my felicitations and good wishes to all the personnel of the Indian Air Force and their families.

Savings—Must for National Progress

SAVINGS AND THE mobilization of resources for investment are essential prerequisites for rapid economic progress and for the well-being and prosperity of our people. It is necessary to cultivate the habit of thrift and savings and also to strive for optimal utilization of scarce resources by improving efficiency and avoiding waste.

I am happy to know that World Thrift Day is being celebrated on 30 October 1996. I extend my good wishes for the success of diverse activities being undertaken on this occasion to generate greater awareness about the importance of savings for national development.

Infantry—Largest Fighting Arm of Our Army

I AM HAPPY to learn that the Infantry, the largest fighting arm of our Army, is celebrating the 50th Infantry Day on 27 October 1996.

The Infantry can be justifiably proud of their glorious service to our nation. They have protected and defended our motherland against external aggression with dedication, valour and perseverance. The Infantry also deserves commendation for its role in countering insurgency and in assisting civilian authorities in times of need.

I am confident that all Infantry personnel will continue their endeavours to attain the highest standards of professional competence in the service of our country.

I send my greetings and cordial felicitations to all Infantry personnel and their families on this occasion.

Indian Navy—A Force to Reckon With

THE INDIAN NAVY has a glorious tradition of service to our nation both in peace and war. The Navy has always responded swiftly and efficiently to challenges of national security, and the country is justifiably proud of our Navy.

I am confident that the Navy, as a body of patriotic, highly trained and disciplined professionals, would continue to build on its proud achievements in the years ahead.

This year is of special significance as it marks the 25th anniversary of the Navy's gallant performance during the 1971 operations. On the occasion of Navy Day 1996, I have great pleasure in extending my greetings and good wishes to all ranks and their families.

Education can Shape Population Patterns

PARLIAMENTARIANS AND LEGISLATORS have a key role to perform in building awareness of the importance of the small family norm and its linkage with economic well-being. In developing countries, this responsibility is all the greater in the context of national endeavours to emerge from conditions of over-population, poverty and backwardness. While education can significantly shape population patterns, investment in social sectors is imperative for increasing stability and growth.

I am happy that a National Seminar of Parliamentarians and Legislators is being organised on Food Security, Population and Development.

I send my greetings and best wishes on the occasion and wish the seminar all success.

Efforts to Check AIDS Must Be Global

EFFECTIVE, PREVENTIVE AND curative measures are essential to curb the spread of AIDS, a dreaded disease which has assumed global dimensions and is growing at an alarming rate in developing countries. The extermination of this menace would be possible only if all sections of society, particularly those who are most vulnerable, join and participate in the efforts made by Government and voluntary agencies.

As we observe World AIDS Day, 1996 with its theme "One World One Hope", let us resolve to work with determination in combating and eliminating this scourge.

India Exemplifies the Scientific Temper

DURING THE DECADES after Independence, India has made significant strides in harnessing science and technology for improving human well-being and in inculcating what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to as a “scientific temper” among the people.

The Annual Indian Science Congress affords an opportunity for our scientists to survey the state of Indian Science and to keep abreast with the latest developments in diverse areas of scientific endeavour in India and abroad.

I am happy to know that the University of Delhi is hosting the 84th Session of the Indian Science Congress in January 1997 with the theme “Frontiers in Science and Engineering”.

I have great pleasure in sending my greetings and best wishes to all participants and wish the deliberations all success.

The Disabled Must Get Full Attention

SIGNIFICANT STEPS ARE being undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations for the rehabilitation and social integration of physically challenged persons. They must be provided with opportunities to enable them to participate fully, actively and with self-confidence in our society. Special attention is required for their their economic rehabilitation and financial independence.

On the occasion of the “International Day for the Disabled” on 3 December 1996, let us strengthen our resolve and our efforts to bring the physically challenged into the mainstream of national life.

Sardar Patel—A Fervent Nationalist

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL was a towering personality and a man of vision who played a significant role during our freedom struggle and in the years after Independence. He was a true and fervent nationalist and an astute and firm administrator. His diverse contributions to our nation included his stellar role in ensuring the smooth integration of the Princely States into India. As Home Minister during the traumatic period after Partition, he worked relentlessly to promote communal harmony and amity. He endeavoured with firmness and determination to eliminate anything which endangered our secular heritage and national unity and integrity.

Deeply devoted to Mahatma Gandhi, serving the nation was his single-minded mission. He had Bapu's trust and appreciation. Bapu had once said about the Sardar: "One of the greatest joys of my life was that I had an opportunity of staying in prison with the Sardar".

It is appropriate that the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is holding a function to pay tributes to this illustrious son of our motherland. Let us work with determination and discipline for a united and strong India which Sardar Patel envisaged.

Sentinels of Our Democracy

PARLIAMENT, THE JUDICIARY and the Press are the sentinels of our Democracy and shape and guide our efforts for national unity, progress and prosperity.

I am happy to know that the National Media Centre, New Delhi is conducting a convention on the theme **“Press, Parliament and Judiciary - their Interdependence and Emerging Challenges”** in February 1997. I send my greetings and felicitations to all the participants and wish the Convention all success.

Dr. Zakir Husain : An Erudite Scholar

A FREEDOM FIGHTER, an ardent nationalist, a deeply sensitive individual full of compassion and caring for the underprivileged and the downtrodden, an intellectual blessed with grace and dignity, Dr. Zakir Husain was a resplendent symbol of our pluralistic ethos.

Dr. Zakir Husain added lustre to every position he adorned. As Vice-Chancellor, Governor, Vice President and Chairman, Rajya Sabha and President of India, he played a vital role in shaping and guiding the destiny of our people and country.

Zakir Sahib always considered himself to be an educationist first and foremost. Indeed, in his inaugural speech after election as President, he said: "Education is a prime institution of national purpose and the quality of education is inescapably involved in the quality of the nation." His lasting contribution to our society is the Jamia Millia Islamia University which continues to impart high-quality education to our youth.

An erudite scholar steeped in Islamic learning and tradition, Zakir Sahib drew deeply from our own composite culture as well as Western philosophy and thought. His translation of Plato's *Republic* in Urdu is a masterpiece. His felicity in German enabled him to transmit the message of Bapu to the German people in their own language, in his book *Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhis*. For children he wrote enchanting stories and fables.

The commemorative volume being brought out during the birth centenary year of Dr. Zakir Husain by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations will provide a valuable insight into the life, work and contribution to our society of one of the great personalities of our time.

Morarji Desai—A Fearless Freedom Fighter

SHRI MORARJI DESAI was an ardent Gandhian, a fearless freedom fighter, a strict administrator and an unbending politician. Shri Desai was known for his clearly-defined and staunchly-held views on diverse matters of public importance. His commitment to Gandhian ideals, his personal integrity and indefatigable capacity to work, enabled him to exemplify and establish very high standards in public life.

A deep understanding of the message of the *Bhagavad Gita* helped him face, with equanimity and resoluteness, the harsh realities of politics and of life in general, and gave him the strength to withstand, with dignity and detachment, a series of challenges, political and personal.

Consistently, he strove for the well-being of our people. As Prime Minister, he shaped and safeguarded the growth of our nation during a very sensitive period.

I pay my respectful tributes to the memory of Shri Morarjibhai Desai whose birth centenary is being celebrated throughout India.

Golden Jubilee of Indian Independence—A Momentous Occasion

FIFTY YEARS IS not long in the life of a nation as ancient as ours. Yet, the jubilee of our freedom is a momentous occasion not merely for India but for global society as a whole.

India's freedom struggle encapsulated the yearnings of a suppressed people for liberty, human dignity, equality and justice in all its dimensions, political, social and economic. It was a mass struggle empowered by the values of our ancient civilization and the moral force of the approach of non-violence fashioned by Mahatma Gandhi. India's freedom movement was a source of inspiration to movements for national liberation and freedom in other countries.

Over the decades, India has emerged as a mature and resilient democracy, the largest in the world. Our people have chosen the path of democratic progress which upholds moral and ethical values and fundamental human rights so dear to our ethos. Today India is proud of her self-sufficient agriculture, diversified industrial base, vast pool of highly technically-trained manpower and a buoyant economy. India's potential as a large democratic market is being recognized the world over.

I am glad that the magazine *Indo-Asia* is bringing out a special commemorative issue on the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence. Nurtured by the late Professor Dr. Gisela Bonn for over more than three decades, *Indo-Asia* has not only contributed towards strengthening the traditional bonds of friendship and understanding between India and Germany but has served as a forum for creating greater awareness among the German people about South Asia and South-East Asia.

I congratulate all those associated with "*Indo-Asia*" and wish them success in their endeavours.

Message on the occasion of *Indo-Asia* bringing out a special commemorative issue on the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence, New Delhi, 12 May 1997

Delhi Legislative Assembly— 50th Year of Independence

DURING THE FIVE decades after Independence, India has emerged as a mature and resilient democracy striving for the promotion of peace, prosperity and progress, not merely in India, but in our region and indeed, the world.

Today, when we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our Freedom, we reaffirm our commitment to the values of Peace and Non-violence, Democracy, Friendship and Cooperation illumined by Bapu, values which spurred millions of women and men to struggle for Justice, Equality and Independence. We pay homage to our freedom fighters who made glorious sacrifices in the cause of our motherland.

Our legislative institutions provide an invaluable forum where the yearnings and aspirations of the people can be heard and where free and frank discussion and debate has an important bearing on national policies and programmes. Our legislators, the representatives of the people, thus have an onerous responsibility to discharge with dedication and devotion.

I am glad that the Delhi Legislative Assembly is organizing a number of programmes during the 50th year of our Independence. I convey my felicitations to all members of the Assembly and extend my good wishes for the success of these endeavours.

Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Drug Abuse

DRUG ABUSE AND the illicit trafficking in narcotics have become issues of significant global concern. Concerted and coordinated action by the Government and voluntary organizations is essential to curb the spread of this menace. Community participation and institutional support are vital for treatment and rehabilitation measures to succeed.

I am glad to learn that the theme for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is “Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Drug Abuse”. On this occasion, I extend my good wishes to all who are engaged in the noble endeavour to eradicate the scourge of drug abuse from our society.

Buddha's Message Must Imbue Our Actions

MORE THAN TWO-and-a-half millennia ago, Lord Buddha propagated in India the philosophy of peace, compassion, non-violence, equality and service to fellow-beings. Since then, this message has radiated throughout the world.

The Tathagatha preached the Middle Path: a life of moderation, balance and harmony; of tolerance and respect for diversity and pluralism; and of the shunning of extremes. The Enlightened One said in the *Dharmachakra Pravartana*:

Ate te bhikkhve ubhe ante anupagamam majijhamapatipada
Tathagatena abhisambuddha chakhukarni yanekarni Upsamay
abhiyaan sambodhai nibbanai savantati

(A middle path, O bhikkhus, avoiding the two extremes, has been discovered by the Tathagatha — a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana!)

Sakyamuni's teachings are of profound contemporary relevance not only for individuals but for society as a whole. We should draw inspiration from the Buddha's life and thought. The values and ideals which he illumined should imbue our actions. Indeed, these precepts should govern the interaction between man and man and nation and nation. It is said in the *Dhammapada*:

“Na he veren verani
sammantidh kudachanam
Averen cha sammanti
Aisa dhammo sanatane”

(Enemity cannot be overcome by an inimical outlook but the spirit of friendship. This is an ancient law.)

With friendship in our hearts towards all, we can achieve peace and goodwill in this One World.

I am glad to learn that the Third General Conference of World Buddhist Supreme Tathagatha Followers is being held in Sri Lanka in July this year and that the theme of the Conference is "World Peace Through Buddhism".

On this occasion, I extend my felicitations to the organizers and participants and wish the Conference success in its noble endeavours.

Empowerment of Women for National Progress

THE EMPOWERMENT OF women is essential for national progress and advancement. Education, active participation in political processes and the provision of job opportunities for women would go a long way in meeting our social goals.

The work of the Delhi Mahila Kalyan Samiti for the emancipation of women deserves to be commended. I extend my best wishes to all members of the Samiti and wish them success in their endeavours.

INDEX

A

Aaj, magazine 255
 Acharya Narendra Dev 52, 120
 Achuta Menon 39-41
 Achuta Menon Centre 39-40
 Acquisition Act 11
 Adi Sankaracharya 220-226
 Ahilyabai Holkar 88
 AIDS 143-145, 160, 368, 405
 AIDS Day 405
 Akbar 177, 378
 Ambedkar, Baba Saheb 21-23, 76-78, 208, 254
 Ambedkar National Award 21-22
 Anandamayee, Ma 390
 Annie Besant 88, 91
 Anti-aparthied movement 10
 Anti-aparthied struggle 8
Anguttara Nikaya, Book, 201
 Archibishop Huddlston 8, 10
 Archibishop Makarios 374
 Ariyaratne, Dr. A.T. 229-233
 Armed Forces Flag Day 395
Artha Shastra, Book, 126
 Aruna Asaf Ali 88
 Aryabhatta 278
 ASEAN 47-48, 61, 71, 320, 330, 360, 365, 368, 284
 Ashoka 177, 206, 208
 Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organisation (APOSHO) 199
 Asia-Pacific Region 149, 320, 322
 Asian Relations Conference 366
 Asiatic Society 130
Atharva Veda, Book, 192, 302
 Aung San Suu Kyi 322, 325
 Ayodhya issue 11
 Azad Hind Fauj 81

B

Balkans 344
 Bapu, see Gandhi, Mahatma
Buddha Dharma Darshan, Book, 210
 Bertrand Russel 92

Bhagavad Gita 178-179, 221, 249, 255, 411

Bhaja Govindam 222-224

Bhakti 234, 236, 239-241

Bhakti Movement 177

Bhaskara 278

Bikaji Cama (Madam) 88

Boer War in South Africa 170

Brahmagupta 278

British Imperialism 82

Buddha's message 415

Buddha's teachings 209, 211

Buddhism 206, 208-211, 329, 364

Buddhist Philosophy 199-200, 210, 278

Buddhist texts 199, 210

C

C. Rajagopalachari 254

C.V. Raman 263, 279

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu 177, 240-241

Chanakya 126

Charaka 161

Charaka Samhita 159, 161, 278

Chandrika Bandarnaike Kumaratunga 306

Chhatrapati Shivaji 289

Child Labour 18

Children's Day 396

Commonwealth 7, 9, 38, 353, 374

Communalism 11-12, 32-33, 38, 85

Constituent Assembly 3, 22, 53, 69, 75-77, 80, 269

Constitution 3, 21, 23, 30, 30, 32, 75-79, 100, 128, 149, 205, 256

D

Dada Saheb Phalke Award 247, 251, 259

Democracy 3-4, 11, 23, 26, 33, 35, 38, 75, 84, 100-101, 112, 205, 323, 352, 354-355, 375, 413

Democratic institutions 34, 101

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das 81

Dhammapada, Book, 152, 200, 203, 207-209, 232, 305, 415

Dharmachakra Pravartana 415
 Dharmaraja Yudhisthara 152, 163
 Dhyan Chand 393
Die Botshaft des Mahatma
Gandhi, Book, 97, 410
 Directive Principles of State Policy
 147, 149
Discovery of India, Book, 123, 200,
 225
 Durgabhai Deshmukh 88
 Dweep Mahotsava 175-178

E

Electron Commission 12
 Environment Protection Act 150
 Environment Tribunal Act 150
 European Commission 362-364
 European Industrial Revolution 117
 European Union 362-364, 375

F

Fa-hien 210
 First National Youth Festival 173-
 174
 First World Konkani Convention 397
 Freedom Struggle 63, 76, 80-81, 83,
 88, 105, 408, 412
 Fundamental Rights 3, 23, 78, 256,
 412

G

Gandhi, Mahatma 3, 5-6, 9, 25, 28-
 32, 34-35, 41, 50, 63, 84-85, 89,
 95, 97, 101, 105-106, 128, 145,
 149, 153, 170, 177, 180, 188,
 190-191, 209, 211, 217, 230, 232,
 249, 254-257, 271, 274, 292, 299,
 326-328, 333, 335, 339, 344, 353,
 380-381, 408, 412-413
 Gandhi, Indira 8-9, 11, 36-39, 87, 93,
 288, 290, 310, 315, 327, 341,
 351-353
 Gandhi Jayanti 389
 Gandhi Martyrdom 370
 Gandhi Peace Prize 41, 229, 325-326
 Gandhi, Rajiv 145, 174, 356
 Gandhian Ideas 411

General Olusegun Obasanjo 351-353
 Girl Child 389
 Golda Meirs (Mrs) 87
 Golden Jubilee Celebrations 75
 Golden Jubilee Year of Independence
 83, 100-101, 137, 260, 289, 354,
 383, 412-413
 Goswami Tulsidas 155
 Govind Vallabh Pant 76

H

Hakim Ajmal Khan 95
 Hamar People's Convention 12
Hanjan, magazine, 217, 249
 Harold Laski 92
Hitopodesa, Book, 189
 Holy Bible 152, 249, 255
 Holy Quran 153, 227, 249, 255
 Huen Tsang 210

I

Ibn Battuta 135
 IMF 13
 Independence Day 24, 67, 308
 India League 91-92
Indica, Book 374
 Indian Air Force 400
 Indian National Congress 88, 96, 106,
 256, 264
 — Calcutta Session 7
 — Karachi Session 3, 128, 149, 256
 — Lahore Session 7
 — Manipur Session 81-82
 — Ramgarh Session 51, 228
 — Tripura Session 81
 Indian National Science Academy
 263, 266, 277, 280
 Indian Prosthodontics Society 388
 Indian Navy 403
 Indian Red Cross Society 391
 Indian Science Congress 263-64, 267,
 271-73, 279, 408
 Indian Science Congress Association
 265
 Indira Awas Yojana 44
 Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital 47
 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace 8, 11,
 311, 351
 Indo-Asia 412

Indo-EU Cooperation Agreement 363
 Industrial Revolution in the West 127
 ISKCON (International Society for
 Krishna Consciousness) 239, 241-
 242
 Islamic Philosophy and Thought 227
 Islamic tradition 227
 Integrated Child Development
 Services Programme 147
 Inter-Parliamentary Conference 86-87
 Inter-Parliamentary Union 86
 International Day for the Disabled
 Persons 155, 407
 International Day for Drug Abuse and
 Illicit Trafficking 414
 International Labour Organisation
 148
 International Literacy Day 216
 International Women's Movement 90

J

J.C. Bose 263, 279
 Jai Prakash Narain (Lok Nayak) 52,
 96
Jataka Tales, Book, 207
 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for Interna-
 tional Understanding 322, 328, 359,
 369
 Jawahar Rozgar Yojana 15
 Jesus Christ 152, 158, 188
 Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council
 12

K

K.M. Munshi 76
 Kailash Nath Katju 76
 Kalidasa 134, 136
Karna Parva, Book, 185
 Kasturba Gandhi 88
 Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial
 Trust 387
Kerala Paniniyam, Book, 185
 Konkanis 397
 Konkani Culture 397
 Krishna Menon, V.K. 90-94

L

Lala Lajpat Rai 249

Li Peng 356
 Lokmanya Tilak 249, 254
 Lord Buddha 198-201, 203-205, 207-
 209, 211, 415
 Lord Govind 213
 Lord Krishna 178, 236
 Lord Rama 235-237
 Lord Venkateshwara 304

M

Maastricht Treaty 363
 Madam Stella Obasanjo 351
 Madhu Limaye 52, 62
 Madrid Peace Conference 372
Mahabharata, 76, 354
Mahaparinibhana Sutta, Book, 204
 Mahathir Mohammad 366
 Mahila Kalyan Samiti 417
 Mahila Samriddhi Yojana 17
Malayala Manorama, 248
 Malthusian Theories 165
 Mandela, Nelson 6, 8, 20, 299-300, 380
 Margaret Thatcher (Mrs) 87
Matribhumi, 248
 Maulana Azad 49-51, 227-229, 249,
 254
 Maulana Azad Education Council 17
 Megasthenes 374
Megdhoot 134
 Middle East Peace Conference 372
 Morarji Desai 411
 Muhammad Bin Tughlak 135
 Muslim League 96
My Experiment with Truth, Book,
 230, 257
My Picture of Free India, Book, 28,
 255-56

N

Narasimha Rao, P.V. 356
 Nasser 327
 National AIDS Programme 143
 National Awards for Child Welfare
 145
 National Awards for the Welfare of
 the Handicapped 155, 158
 National Elementary Education
 Mission 46
 National Environmental Tribunal 150

National Film Fair Awards 245, 250
 National Front 73
 National Literary Mission 46, 217-220
 National Human Rights Commission 12
 National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation 17, 45
 National Policy on Children 147
 National Safety Awards 125, 127
Natya Shastra, Book 178
 Nazi Aggression 335
 Nazism 370
 Nehru, Pt. Jawaharlal 5-9, 22, 31, 39, 49, 66, 76, 78, 89, 91-93, 100, 109, 111, 117, 123-124, 127, 173-174, 177, 180, 183-184, 196-197, 200, 209, 225, 245, 249, 254, 257, 263-264, 267, 269, 271, 279-80, 285, 299, 308, 311-12, 315-316, 319, 322-325, 327-328, 335, 337-339, 341, 345-346, 366-367, 369-370, 374, 378, 380, 406
 Nehru Motilal 7, 254
 Non-Aligned Movement 38, 327, 352-353, 359, 374, 382
 Non-Aligned Summit 48
 Non-Cooperation Movement 95
 Non-Violence 5, 9
 N. T. Rama Rao 72-75
 NTR National Film Awards 75, 258, 260
 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy 48
 Nursi Mehta 153, 170, 333
 Nyerere, Dr. K. Julius 41, 325-328

O

Othello, Book 186

P

Panchayati Raj 16, 28, 30, 34, 84, 101, 276
 Panchayati Raj Institutions 167, 219, 276
 Panchayats 28-32, 219
 Panditji, See Nehru, Jawaharlal
 Parchure Shastri 170
 Patel, Sardar 76, 408
 Pethic Lawrence 92

Plato 410
 Prasar Bharati Act 55
 Prasar Bharati Corporation 55
 Press Act of 1910 255
 Press and Unauthorised Newspaper Act of 1930 255
 Press Council of India 253-254, 256-258
 Prime Minister Rozgar Yojna 14, 44
 Prophet Mohammad 398
 Public Liability Insurance Act 150
 Purna Swaraj 32, 78

Q

Quit India Movement 254

R

Rabindranath Tagore 38, 191, 329, 383
 Rajkumari Amrit Kaur 88
 Raja Rammohan Roy 254
 Rajaraja Varma 184-187
 Rajendra Prasad, Dr. 274-275, 291, 294
 Rajiv Gandhi Foundation 145
 Ramanujacharya 240
 Ramanujam 263
Ramcharitmanas 155, 309
 Ram Manohar Lohia 52, 63-65
 Red Cross 168-170
Republic 410
 Republic Day 3, 6, 32-33, 36, 62, 71, 73, 86
Rig Veda 8, 28, 74, 118-119, 188-189, 216, 221, 236, 253, 255, 264, 289, 301, 327
 Rowlatt Act of 1919 255
 Ruskin 230

S

SAARC 19, 47, 61, 71, 289, 305, 308, 320, 354, 357, 361, 375, 377, 379-380, 382, 384
Sama Veda 178, 303
 Sam Nujoma 311, 376, 378
 Sankaradeva 240
 Sant Kabirdas 213
 Sant Tukaram 153
 Saint Basaveswara 170
 Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan 221, 225, 236, 394

Secularism 3, 38
Shakuntalam 186
 Shimla Agreement 20, 97
 Social Justice 3
 South Africa 6-10, 299-300, 326, 353, 380-383
 Southern African Development Community (SADC) 377
 Sri Aurobindo 254
 Sri Sathya Sai Baba 151-154, 234
 Stafford Crisp 92
 St. Paul 153
 Subash Chandra Bose 81-83, 88
 Subramania Bharati 173-174
 Sucheta Kriplani 88
 Sufism 177
Surah-al-Arbia, Book, 153
 Surdas 155, 177
 Surendranath Banerjee 254
 Sarojini Naidu 88
Susruta Samhita 159, 161, 278
 Swami Vivekananda 173-175, 183, 214, 224
 SWAPO 376

T

Taitreya Upanishad 212
Tarjuman-al-Quran, Book 227
 Tathagatha 415-416
 Third World Conference of World Buddhist Supreme Tathagatha Followers 416
 Tyagaraja 234-39

U

ULFA Militants 12
 UN Charter 7, 311, 316
 UN resolutions 37
 UNESCO 228
 UNICEF 148

United Nations 7, 9, 19, 38, 92, 299, 316, 319, 352-353, 355, 359, 362, 374, 377
 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 149
 Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations 321

V

Varahamira 278
 Venkataraman R. 356
 Vinoba Bhave 389
 Vernacular Press Act of 1879 255
 Vivekananda, Swami, 214, 224

W

William Shakespeare 292
 World Congress on Prosthodontics 388
 World Declaration on the Development of Children 148
 World Population Day 165, 392
 World Red Cross Day 391
 World Summit for Children 147
 World Summit for Social Development 48
 World Trade Organization 138, 321

X

Y

Young India, Book, 188, 211, 249, 271, 326
 Yeltsin 20

Z

Zakir Husain, Dr. 50, 94-97, 267, 410

“India can take
pride in preserving its
achievements as well
as its expansion
during the last fifty
years of its
independence.”

J. D. Sharma



PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

ISBN : 81-230-0614-4

Price Rs. 400/-

